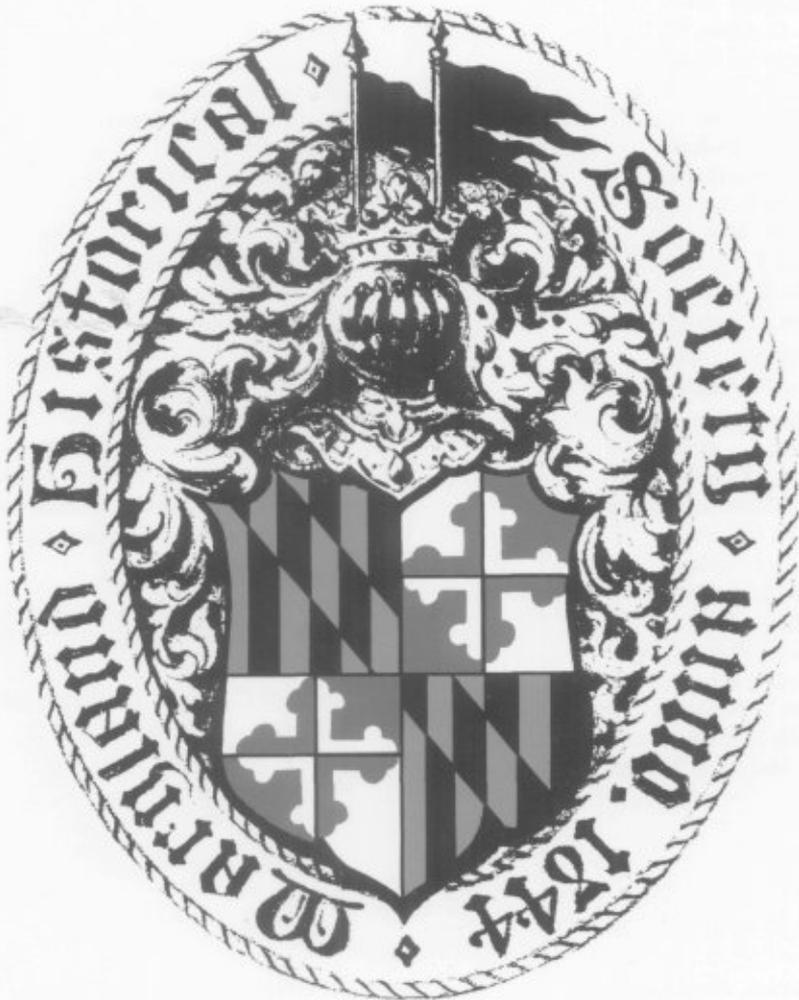


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# Maryland Historical Magazine



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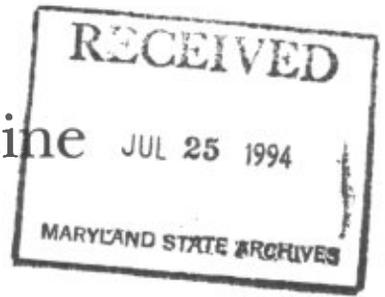
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VOLUME 89

SUMMER 1994



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## Special Issue: History in Maryland The Sesquicentennial of the Maryland Historical Society

- Saving History: The Maryland Historical Society and Its Founders . . . . . 133  
*by Kevin B. Sheets*
- Being a Renaissance Man in Nineteenth-Century Baltimore:  
John Gottlieb Morris . . . . . 156  
*Michael J. Kurtz*
- Laying the Foundations: Herbert Baxter Adams, John Thomas Scharf,  
and Early Maryland Historical Scholarship . . . . . 170  
*Patricia Dockman Anderson*
- Research Notes & Maryland Miscellany . . . . . 184  
Tobacco, Planters, Tenants, and Slaves: A Portrait of Montgomery County in 1783,  
*by Todd H. Barnett*  
A Letter from George Washington, *by Jennifer A. Bryan*  
The Pratt Street Wharves in the Thirties, *by A. Bennett Wilson, Jr.*  
Maryland History Bibliography, 1993: A Selected List, *compiled by Anne S. K. Turkos*  
*and Jeff Korman*
- Book Reviews . . . . . 233  
Goodman, *Tobacco in History: The Cultures of Dependence*, by Bayly Ellen Marks  
Ryon, *West Baltimore Neighborhoods: Sketches of Their History, 1840-1960*, by W. Edward Orser  
Hobson, *Mencken: A Biography*, by Arthur J. Gutman  
Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America: Exceptionalism and Identity from 1492 to 1800*, by David W. Jordan

Abbot, *The Papers of George Washington*, by Orlando Ridout V  
 Brown, *Redeeming the Republic: Federalists, Taxation, and the Origins of the Constitution*, by David B. Mattern  
 Altoff, *Deep Water Sailors, Shallow Water Soldiers: Manning the United States Fleet in Lake Erie-1813*, by Scott S. Sheads  
 Forbes, *Thirty Years After: An Artist's Memoir of the Civil War*, by Robert L. Weinberg  
 Gallagher, ed., *The First Day at Cettysburg: Essays on Confederate and Union Leadership*, and *The Second Day at Cettysburg: Essays on Confederate and Union Leadership*, by Brandon Beck

Books Received ..... 251  
 Notices ..... 253  
 Maryland Picture Puzzle ..... 254

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*Editor's Corner:*

"Venerable" can mean merely old or something more—being worthy of veneration. At 150 years, our Maryland Historical Society certainly can claim to be old by American institutional standards. We may also think of it as worthy of deep respect: For its century and one-half, the society has been a leading instrument in the work of collecting, preserving, and interpreting those things that tell us of our past. The MdHS in a sense has invented Maryland history; it in any event stood in the breach when no other agency, public or private, could collect and keep the remnants that all researchers now rummage through in writing their own version of the state's history. This issue of the magazine explores some chapters in that story.

*Cover design:* One of the two exotic seal design proposals that Tiffany & Co. of New York made for the Maryland Historical Society in June, 1889. (The editors here color the Calvert-Crossland quarters in a sesquicentennial flourish.) The year before a committee consisting of Mendes Cohen, Clayton Coleman Hall, and Frederick W. Story had established the basic form. Not until February, 1895, did the committee finally adopt a design—that one prepared by the jewelers Bailey, Banks & Biddle. Slightly simplified, it remains in use today and graces the table of contents page of every issue of the magazine.

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Brantz Mayer as a young man. Unsigned oil painting c. 1830. Mayer, of German ancestry, was a lawyer, author, historian, genealogist, army officer, and prominent Unionist. In 1844, at the age of thirty-four, he became the leading force in the formation of the Maryland Historical Society. (Maryland Historical Society.)

# Saving History: The Maryland Historical Society and Its Founders

KEVIN B. SHEETS

On the same spring day in March 1844, Severn Teackle Wallis and Brantz Mayer made the first donations to what the newly formed Maryland Historical Society called its Cabinet. Wallis's gift dated to 1652—a Massachusetts pine tree shilling. Mayer gave a hammer made from the keel of Capt. James Cook's ship, *Endeavor*, which he sailed around the world in 1768–1771.

Neither gift linked to Maryland's past, but both reflected the diverse assortment of curiosities the society's founders sought for display. Wallis and Mayer, two young men of Baltimore, recently established lawyers and men of letters, joined with another young attorney, Frederick W. Brune, Jr., and sent out a circular letter requesting items of historic interest for the society's collections. They especially wanted manuscripts of all kinds: original letters and books; legislative acts and records; public orations and sermons; autographs; coins; narratives of Indian wars and exploits; antiquities of the North American tribes; genealogies; general statistics on births, deaths, and the weather; specimens of natural history; memoirs; and newspapers, magazines, and published pamphlets of Maryland.<sup>1</sup>

This keen interest in the written word and comprehensive collecting suggest one of the several traditions in which Mayer, Wallis, and their colleagues belonged. The charter members of the Maryland Historical Society identified with the American literary and philosophical societies that dated back to the eighteenth century and persisted into the nineteenth. The men of those societies cultivated knowledge of all sorts as a mark of genteel living. In comparison with these societies, however, the society was at once more specialized in its focus than eighteenth-century philosophical societies and more public in its appeal than eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century literary clubs. Unlike belles-lettrists who lacked a self-conscious public role, members of the society assumed for themselves guardianship of the state's history. They collected state records and the papers of Maryland's old families. They raised monuments to honor Maryland heroes and historic moments. They wrote and read essays before the society and published books. They aspired to cultural, if not political, leadership and sought to impress the public with the usefulness of their knowledge. Although never quite as committed to popularizing that knowledge as were the lyceums of the 1820s, the founders of the Maryland

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Mr. Sheets, a graduate student in history at the University of Virginia, has interned at the Maryland Historical Society.

Historical Society fashioned a distinctive cultural institution out of traditional and contemporary models.

The twenty-two gentlemen who applied for the society's charter in early 1844 did so for various reasons, and the society's early history led to a rich interplay between gentility and democracy, ornamental and useful knowledge, high-brow and popular culture, and avocational and specialized studies. One hundred fifty years later—despite its growth and professionalization—the society continues to seek sure footing in an ever changing city.



When in 1840 Brantz Mayer wrote to Joel Poinsett in South Carolina asking about the conditions of the historical society there, he unwittingly tapped into a literary and philosophical tradition reaching back to the mid-eighteenth century. A number of gentlemen in Baltimore, he wrote, were eager to establish a society to “rescue the mouldering remains of our own state’s early history from utter decay.”<sup>2</sup> Older institutions like the Boston Athenaeum, American Philosophical Society, and American Academy of Arts and Sciences were similarly interested in collecting and preserving materials for study. The AAAS, chartered in 1780, pledged itself “to cultivate every art and science which may tend to advance the interest, honor, dignity, and happiness of a free, independent, and virtuous people.”<sup>3</sup>

That such public figures as John Adams, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, and the governor and lieutenant governor of Massachusetts served as charter members of the AAAS is not surprising; the public and private spheres significantly overlapped in the eighteenth century. Those men who held public office also directed society's cultural life. Charles Greenberry Ridgely, a member of the Kent County, Delaware, gentry, typified the readiness to assume responsibility for public affairs. Belonging to a learned organization helped to mark one's genteel status.<sup>4</sup>

Gentlemen reaffirmed their gentility by joining philosophical and literary societies and through the arts of conversation. To carry oneself in polite company required broad learning and ease of expression; consequently, these early societies cultivated all types of knowledge. The breadth of interests claimed by their charters encompassed the sciences, agriculture, medicine, geography, mathematics, and philosophy. Gentleman-generalists were expected to acquaint themselves with each field—even if sometimes the veneer was thin. The Library Company of Baltimore, for example, organized in 1796 by ministers and merchants, stocked books of fiction, biography, literature, travel, history, science, mathematics, theology, philosophy, and the law.<sup>5</sup> Perusing these volumes would ornament a gentleman's conversation and make him interesting in polite company.<sup>6</sup>

Members of the Maryland Historical Society displayed similar genteel concerns, but after the 1830s knowledge had become more specialized and the role of gentleman-generalist more difficult to sustain. A gentleman could realistically dabble in but a few subjects. Science had begun to create its own language, so that only specialists could participate in serious discussions.<sup>7</sup> Specialization was evident

in the two earliest historical societies, those of Massachusetts (1791) and New York (1804). The American Antiquarian Society (1812), national in its scope, concentrated its efforts on collecting Americana. Even the Boston Athenaeum, once an all-purpose organization, narrowed its interests in the nineteenth century as more specialized institutions assumed responsibility in particular fields.<sup>8</sup> Like those focused organizations, the Maryland Historical Society carved out an area in which its members could credibly claim authority.

Not all societies, however, made explicit overtures to the public, and fewer still spoke in terms of the public good they might provide. A number of gentlemanly self-culture societies helped their members perfect a public presentation in private. Young litterateurs joined *Spectator* clubs in the early nineteenth century to improve composition and expression by writing essays in the style of Addison. Benjamin Franklin organized his Junto and copied essays from the *Spectator* to improve himself. In Annapolis in the mid-eighteenth century, gentlemen formed the Tuesday Club. A similar group formed in Baltimore following the conclusion of the War of 1812. The Delphian Club contributed essays, poems and articles to journals and newspapers in Baltimore. Members critiqued each other's work and often suggested new topics for discussion and debate. John Pendleton Kennedy, the Baltimore novelist and founder of the historical society, was friendly with members of the Delphian Club and organized and participated in other groups, the Belles-Lettres Society and the Monday Club. He and his friend, Peter Hoffman Cruse, wrote and edited *The Red Book*, a "satiric potpourri in the *Spectator* tradition."<sup>9</sup>

Looking to belles-lettres and polished self-expression, these societies lacked a self-conscious public role that marked the American Philosophical Society or the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Significantly, Delphians used pseudonyms. Novelist John Neal, for instance, was called by his fellow Delphians Jehu O'Catarract. Tobias Watkins, president of the club, a physician and editor of *The Portico*, called himself Pertinax Particular. Other nicknames included Quizzifer Wugs, Peter Paragraph, and Occasional Punnifer.<sup>10</sup> Such naming suggests that they considered literature a personal, private activity—gentlemanly, avocational, and purely for enjoyment. The men who in their youth joined the literary societies in Baltimore later turned up on the membership roster of the historical society, and the sociability of their early years persisted. Members of the society used its reading room as a "resort." Their regular "soirees," very much in the tradition of London coffeehouses of the eighteenth century, brought them together to talk current events, play chess, read newspapers, and smoke.<sup>11</sup> Yet by the 1840s Baltimore had changed so that a genteel life no longer commanded respect from the lesser sorts. Thus members of the historical society (as had their eighteenth-century forebears) sought to impress the public with the idea that their learning had a practical side.<sup>12</sup> Though they sprinkled their writings liberally with classical allusions and Latin quotations, they engaged the history of Maryland precisely because it was deemed useful, especially to the young. Additionally, they carved out a public space for their activities by erecting a building to house their growing collection and to provide rooms for both the Library Company and the Mercantile Library

Association, a self-improvement library for clerks and apprentices.<sup>13</sup> The society called its building the Athenaeum, an allusion to the Greek and Roman temples where scholars met. John Spear Smith, first president and son of Gen. Samuel Smith, spoke of it in those terms. Smith called the Atheneum, which opened in 1848, “a noble temple, dedicated exclusively to learning and art.” To preempt any criticism that the Athenaeum was merely a salon for unproductive elites, Smith championed its usefulness. “Within its ample sanctuaries,” he said,

will be embraced the youthful student, striving to fit himself for the active career becoming an American;—a repository of knowledge, in the ancient and choice Library of another association;—and our own institution, which garners up the data of history, and will extend its kindly patronage to the culture of the fine arts.<sup>14</sup>

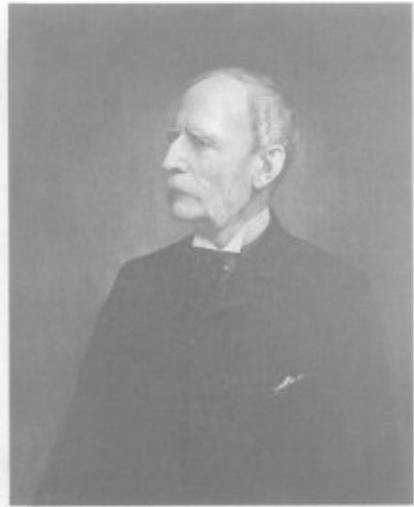
Evidence of the society’s usefulness came in the form of expanded membership that did not necessarily mean democratic membership. The society hoped to attract the best men from the city and state, and it particularly sought the attention and favor of the nation’s leading men. From the initial twenty-two charter members, the society within weeks subscribed seventy more. By the end of the decade, membership topped two hundred. Another hundred joined by 1854, and four years later five hundred names appeared on the roster. Each subscribed five dollars upon initiation and pledged an additional five dollars yearly.<sup>15</sup> The society classified members differently depending on where they lived. Active members, the most numerous, resided within the city or within fifteen miles of Baltimore. Those living elsewhere in the state became corresponding members. The society named as honorary members those persons “distinguished for their literary or scientific attainments, particularly in the department of History, throughout the world.”<sup>16</sup> George Bancroft and William H. Prescott, Jared Sparks, Benjamin Silliman of Harvard, Edward Everett, and Albert Gallatin, were offered such honors.

Honorary memberships perhaps best illustrated the distance between the historical society in the 1840s and the philosophical societies of the eighteenth century, whose members were invariably the leaders of both cultural and political life. They took their influence for granted. In the antebellum years, the private men who formed the Maryland Historical Society had to earn their influence. The separation of public and private spheres now dictated that gentlemen, who no longer managed public affairs, come before the public as representatives of the value and utility of polite learning.

Not a few mid-nineteenth-century gentlemen chose the lyceum as a way to bridge the public and private spheres and make claims to the public’s approbation. The lyceum, more than any other organization in the nineteenth century, best exemplified the twin tendencies of antebellum America: demonstrating one’s learning and diffusing useful knowledge. Lyceum lectures gave men the opportunity “to come before the public” and make their mark.<sup>17</sup> Lyceums offered a buffet of topics: geology, optics, the nervous system, astronomy, public education, ancient history, and more. In many ways the variety of topics suggested that audiences in the

nineteenth century were as interested as their eighteenth-century counterparts in assembling a stock of knowledge to enliven their conversation. Young Isaac Mickle in Camden, New Jersey, for example, attended lectures, concerts, scientific demonstrations, recitals, museum exhibits, theater shows, and political rallies. His diary faithfully recorded his varied excursions—more as a testament to his participation than as an opportunity for reflection. Mickle, like many of his contemporaries, consciously cultivated useful knowledge while seizing opportunities to display his learning.<sup>18</sup>

Mickle was immersed in the cultural crosscurrents of his day, a hybrid of genteel learning, democratic participation, and literary avocation. The Maryland Historical Society, too, blended features from these various strands of intellectual and cultural activities. Like philosophical circles, the society amassed manuscript material and curiosities but focused on the history of the state. The men who founded the society had met as the Delphians two decades before. They saw each other in the rooms of the new Athenaeum building and used the society as a platform from which to address the public. Writing essays and addresses, publishing biographies and histories, and riding the lyceum circuit, they identified with and participated in the diffusion and popularization of knowledge. Their activities brought them some amount of public notice. Their claims to usefulness sustained them.



Severn Teackle Wallis, society president, 1892–94. Oil on canvas by Thomas C. Corner, 1896. (Maryland Historical Society.)



Society members, to whom we now turn, were aware of their city's history. They had lived through it; many helped make it, and all helped preserve it. They were men who often identified with their Revolutionary-era fathers and found themselves caught in a progressive current that challenged old ways. Not reactionaries, they aspired to respectability. Hardly recluses, they eagerly sought a public role. Undeniably gentlemen, they participated in the literary arts of history to affirm their status and moderate the flux in a shifting city.

Few images better capture such change than that of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, a relic from the flush days of revolution, who shoveled the first dirt on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad project. The image of the last of the Signers performing his last public service on Independence Day, 1828, is striking.<sup>19</sup> The B&O embodied the spirit of the age: progress. By 1834 the line reached Harpers Ferry, but Carroll had



John H. B. Latrobe. Oil painting by John Dabour, acquired by the society in 1896.

been two years in his grave. The Revolutionary generation passed away, and most Marylanders paid their respects and then looked ahead to tomorrow's promise.

The din of 1820s Baltimore signaled change, and most people interpreted it positively. Infrastructural developments enriched urban life. Gas lights lit the streets, a signal improvement in community safety. Steam power, new in 1822, milled increasing quantities of flour grown to the west of the city. Inside Baltimore, new industries emerged and contributed to the economic bustle. In Canton, a reconstituted industrial community in southeast Baltimore, Peter Cooper built machinery for the railroads. Amidst the significant and substantial changes altering the city's landscape in the

early decades of the nineteenth century, and despite the financial panic of 1819, Baltimoreans harbored hopes of an expanded economy spelling peace, progress, and prosperity.

Such hopes were tried by cyclical economic turns, another one hitting the city in 1837. Nevertheless, the commercial city that emerged was qualitatively different from the one it replaced.<sup>20</sup> In an earlier day a handshake sealed business transactions. By the late 1830s, commerce had become institutionalized. The old class of merchants withdrew, leaving room for a new breed.

At the time of the founding of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore could point to clear class lines. Workers lived in ethnic and income pockets. The wealthy removed themselves to the fashionable Mount Vernon area. The sons of the old merchants became "rentiers." Income on investments supported their leisured lives. Such "social leadership" believed in "a sense of *noblesse oblige*, politics as avocation rather than vocation, a preference for land and natural production and a distaste for trade and manufacturing, a concern with family and breeding, and a commitment to amateurism and an aversion to professionalism."<sup>21</sup> By the 1830s John Spear Smith, Robert Gilmor, Jr., and John Pendleton Kennedy, three Maryland Historical Society founders, exemplified the rentier life.

Marylanders, like most Americans, exercised and protected bragging rights religiously. Baltimoreans lived in the third largest city in America and took pride in all its amenities and "firsts," including the first telegraphed message, which Samuel Morse sent to Baltimore from Washington in 1844. In America as in the city, people dwelled in the future. In the antebellum period "experiences of newness became a familiar norm whereas the portents of pastness were irrelevant."<sup>22</sup> Tradition for many citizens played no role. History seemed a burden.

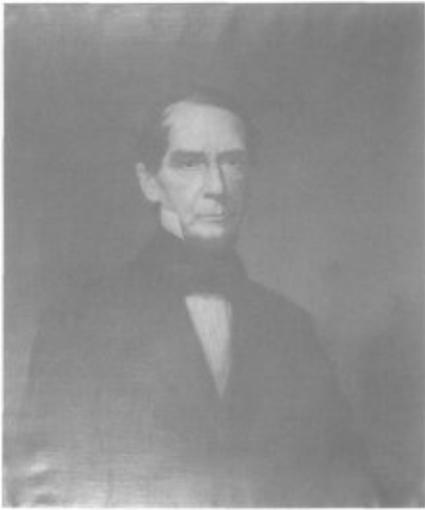
Marylanders felt pulled by the promise of the future, but some cast a contented glance backward and boasted of an honorable past. In Baltimore, those persons included John Kennedy, Brantz Mayer, John H. B. Latrobe, and John Spear Smith. The twenty-two men who founded the Maryland Historical Society elude easy characterization. While they all lived within the professional classes in Baltimore, they may best be seen as part of several interlocking circles of association. Letters and gentlemanly ideals linked them together. By engaging in a literary culture dedicated to history, they attempted to chisel out an intellectual niche for themselves. Their educational background, especially in the law, gave them a grounding in letters which, with the accessibility of history, opened opportunities for public expression. Indeed they believed that being a gentleman meant giving over one's life to public service. Those with an antiquarian bent naturally felt that their identity as public men called them to honor the past by preserving documentary records for the edification of subsequent generations.

The average age of the founders was about forty-six, though they ranged in age from twenty-eight to seventy. Most were under fifty years old. Smith, the president, was fifty-seven; McMahan, vice president, was forty-four. The recording secretary, Sebastian F. Streeter, was only thirty-four. Nearly all the founding members had attended college. At least four had graduated from the Catholic St. Mary's College in Baltimore.<sup>23</sup>

Half of the founders had legal training either by reading in the offices of a Baltimore lawyer or by more formal legal schooling.<sup>24</sup> Mayer and George W. Dobbin were classmates at St. Mary's, and both studied law at the University of Maryland's new program begun by David Hoffman in 1823. Dobbin and another founder, William A. Talbot, opened the law firm of Dobbin and Talbot. Frederick W. Brune, Jr., studied law at Harvard and then read in the offices of Judge Purviance in Baltimore. Kennedy, who studied the law but practiced infrequently, read in the office of his uncle, Edmund Pendleton, and used the law books of the late Samuel Chase, signer of the Declaration and Supreme Court justice. Wallis read with William Wirt. His privileged background notwithstanding, Wallis championed the workingman's cause in court. Latrobe, who attended Georgetown and St. Mary's College and read law with Robert Goodloe Harper, was admitted to the bar in 1825. In today's lexicon he could be considered a corporate lawyer. The B&O sought his



John Pendleton Kennedy, lawyer, Whig politician, writer, and early stalwart of the society. From a daguerrotype made in 1850. (Prints and Photographs, Maryland Historical Society.)



John Spear Smith, president of the society from its founding until 1866. An oil painting by James K. Harley, 1841. (Maryland Historical Society.)

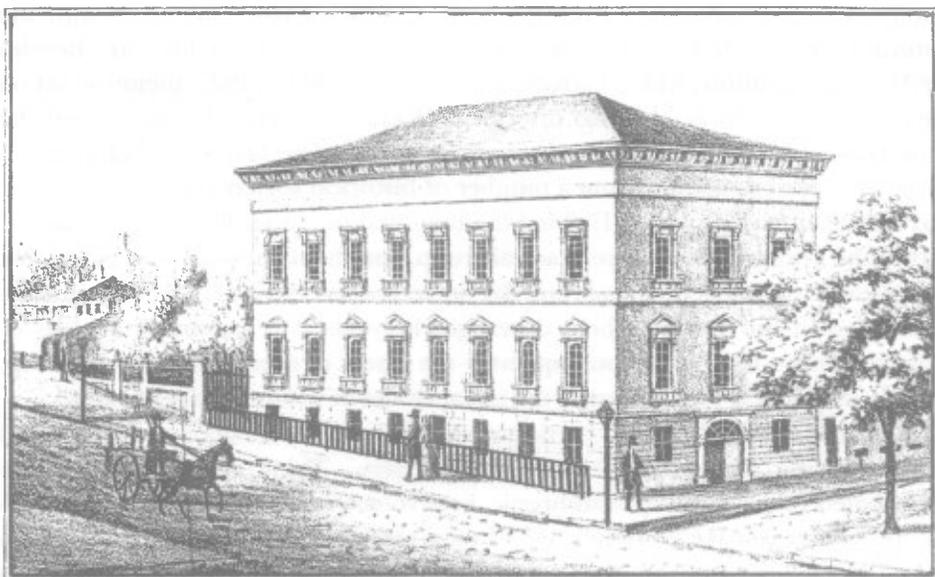
counsel, and the railroad construction firm of Winans, Harrison, and Winans retained him for the generous fee of \$60,000.<sup>25</sup>

Several members served as lawmakers. Kennedy served at various times in local, state, and national government. After his own and Henry Clay's defeat in 1844, Kennedy despaired at what he considered democratic excess. The best men in the country, he wrote his friend Robert C. Winthrop, are "continually sacrificed to every whim of the foolish, and to every design of the wicked." In his private writings he suggested that suffrage be limited.<sup>26</sup> Fielding Lucas, Jr., publisher and bookseller, was elected president of the Baltimore City Council. John McMahon was the youngest elected member of the state assembly in 1823. Smith served in Maryland's senate, and Streeter was a

member of the House of Delegates. They all championed internal improvements, including the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and the B&O railroad. Latrobe and Wallis were offered appointive public office but declined.

Focusing on men like Kennedy and Wallis, one could conclude that historical societies were filled with elites. Both men had aristocratic pretensions. Kennedy's high hopes for the historical society faded in the 1850s. He wanted a limited membership of the hundred best men in Baltimore. In a letter to philanthropist George Peabody, he lamented the society's "unlimited and variable membership."<sup>27</sup> A bachelor, Wallis enjoyed "a hearty partiality for the society of young men," according to one of his eulogists. His reputation for elocution matched his affinity for Latin quotations. On his deathbed, he reputedly uttered a line from Virgil's *Aeneid*, *manibus date lilia plenis* (give lilies with open hands) after receiving from his doctor an arrangement of Easter lilies. Wallis was "a young man given to acting the elderly bachelor."<sup>28</sup>

Not all members were like him. John Sumner, who by 1853 had left Baltimore for Harrison County, Virginia, wrote back to Cornelius Thompson at the Atheneum. "I dare say you would wonder how out-door rambles and scrambles over steep hill-sides, muddy roads, and broad creeks, would agree with me after spending the day [in Baltimore] on velvet chairs and Brussels carpets," he wrote. "But it suits me very well." He asked about the exhibition of paintings in the galleries of the society and the monthly "soirees" they held there, but confessed that it was a great satisfaction to him "that we have no Market Street to dress up for, and can wear our blue shirts and shabby clothes without any one being surprised."<sup>29</sup>



ATHENÆUM.

The Baltimore Athenaeum, first home of the Maryland Historical Society, at the corner of St. Paul and Saratoga streets..

Mayer probably best articulated the feelings of society members when he complained to Alexander Vattemare, a Frenchman who visited Baltimore in 1839–1840 to promote a system of international cultural exchanges. “It is humiliating to confess it,” he wrote,

but *moneymaking* and *president-making* are the two great occupations of all our people—public and private. The great, solemn, noble, uses of government or of wealth, are, entirely unappreciated, so that even when *power* and *money* are both acquired, their possessors are still unaware of the *real uses of their lives*. Possession, not enjoyment, is the great aim, so that possession, at length, becomes enjoyment itself.<sup>30</sup>

Mayer preferred to think of himself as a gentleman who, by virtue of his public activities, contributed to the betterment of society.

Most of the men in the society led public lives, meeting frequently in social and professional circles. Evidence is impressionistic, culled from memorials and obituaries, news clippings, city directories and histories, and correspondence, but the fragments suggest the varied and full lives they led. Society members sat on the boards of benevolent organizations, hospitals, insane asylums, and prisons. Five of the founders and early members served on the board of the Maryland Eye and Ear Institute. The presidency of the Baltimore Life Insurance Company was held by John I. Donaldson. George Dobbin held positions as president, founder, trustee, and director of at least eight organizations in Baltimore, including the Library

Company and the Peabody Institute, both of which shared members with the historical society. Many of the members promoted education in Baltimore. Besides the Maryland Institute, which Latrobe and Lucas founded in 1825, members sat on the commission of school board directors. Wallis and Kennedy both served the University of Maryland as provost at various times. The Maryland Colonization Society received donations from a number of historical society members; Latrobe and later member Dr. James Hall led the organization. Socially, members met as part of the Friday Club, a lawyer's social group, and the names of several members appear on the roster of the Bench and Bar Society of Baltimore, a relief organization established in the 1820s to help distraught lawyers.<sup>31</sup> A systematic analysis of organizations in Baltimore would quantify the extent of overlapping membership, but this sampling at least indicates the social circles in which members moved.

These Baltimore gentlemen participated widely in civic affairs, but what united them was their dedication to a culture of letters. These men—most of whom participated in numerous philanthropic, benevolent, and cultural societies in Baltimore—chose to make literature one of their public enterprises. They settled on history as a subject in need of an association, a building, a library, and a program of activities.



History in the early part of the nineteenth century supplied a more accessible field of study than science. Until the last quarter of the century, history fell under the rubric of literature, and unlike science, which had become increasingly specialized, history required no formal training.<sup>32</sup> As a subject by itself, history only entered public education after 1820. In colleges history was taught merely as a “literary amusement for the students.”<sup>33</sup> Colleges created “enlightened gentlemen,” not professional historians. There was no distinction between what professionals today call “amateur” or “popular” and academic history. The accreditation of scholars came only with the establishment of the first graduate program in history at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore in 1876.

Before then anyone could write history, and many did. For the gentleman of the historical society, history was a ready-made story that simply needed telling. With sources at hand, one might, suggested President Smith in 1850, “without much inconvenience, devote a few brief hours to so meritorious a task.”<sup>34</sup> On a Saturday, he might gather together the details of the Battle of Bladensburg or write a life and character of Mordecai Gist, the Maryland major who at the battle of Long Island led his troops in a headlong assault against the British to protect retreating American troops.

Members read papers at monthly meetings. They also gave public addresses on holidays, anniversaries, and dedications. Charles Mayer gave the first address to the society after its founding; his brother addressed the public on the occasion of the opening of the Athenaeum Building in 1848. A decade earlier, when Greenmount Cemetery was formally dedicated, John Pendleton Kennedy spoke and Severn

Teackle Wallis read his poem, "The First Grave."<sup>35</sup> The lyceum circuit attracted Mayer. The New Orleans board of school directors contracted Mayer to deliver a lecture for the benefit of the "Public School Lyceum and Library Society." Mayer lectured on "Women in the 19th Century" in the spring of 1857. In December he accepted another offer to speak and collected his usual lyceum fee of \$100.<sup>36</sup>

Like the Delphians and the members of the Dialectic Society, the members of the Maryland Historical Society used the organization's platform to address the larger community. In their own way, members claimed authority over Maryland's past by keeping its papers and discussing its history. Brantz Mayer, who at various times served the society as corresponding secretary and president, wrote at least six papers that the society later published. The next most prolific was John Spear Smith. Biographies of Revolutionary heroes and other subjects in colonial Maryland history always drew attention. Addresses suggest that their interest was not only focused on Maryland. J. Morrison Harris delivered a paper on California and another on the character of Sir Walter Raleigh. Moses Sheppard spoke on the African slave trade in Jamaica. George L. L. Davis explored the origins of the expedition to Japan.<sup>37</sup> Members embraced speaking engagements as opportunities to put their names in front of the public. Certain members carved out a niche in the historical record. Sebastian F. Streeter took three meetings of the society to get through his long paper on the "Argentinian Republic of South America." He began at the June 1848 meeting, and the minutes of the society indicate he concluded his address in November. (The society did not meet during July, August, or September.)<sup>38</sup> Brantz Mayer became a recognized scholar of Mexican history. Following a year-long diplomatic stint in Mexico City in the early 1840s, which he used primarily as an extended sightseeing and research tour, Mayer in 1843 published *Mexico as It Was and as It Is*. With a first printing of fifteen thousand copies, the work quickly became a standard on the subject for a generation or more.<sup>39</sup> Like Mayer, Wallis used his travel experience in Spain to write two books of his own. Having learned to speak Spanish while at St. Mary's College, Wallis visited Spain in 1847 and published *Glimpses of Spain* two years later. In another four years he published a second, more serious history, *Spain: Her Institutions, Politics and Public Men*.

When Kennedy delivered the second annual address before the society, a discourse on the life and character of George Calvert, Maryland's founder, he expected a stir. Kennedy loved the antiquarian search and turned the founding legend on its head. Calvert, he argued, sought a "wise and beneficial commercial speculation" in Maryland. "There is no evidence," he said of Calvert, "that his ardor in these undertakings was stimulated by any motive having reference to particular religious opinions."<sup>40</sup>

Kennedy's journal betrays his disappointment: "The Catholic Magazine for this month is out. Nothing about my address before the Historical Society. They have thought better of it, I suspect."<sup>41</sup> The reply came in April's issue, written by fellow founder Bernard U. Campbell, a Catholic and a Baltimore banker. Campbell, who rarely liked anything Kennedy wrote,<sup>42</sup> accused him of "inventing" the character of Calvert, impugned Kennedy's research, and questioned his patriotism. The latter

charge is perhaps one key to understanding gentility's attenuated hold over mid-nineteenth-century society. The gentry had to prove itself useful, which may account for the self-conscious patriotism of the Maryland Historical Society. Campbell undermined Kennedy's claim to any social approbation.

Kennedy replied the next month. "It is a critic's privilege to show his spleen," he said, "and almost his nature to be personally offensive."<sup>43</sup> The pamphlet war ended there, but Kennedy ordered 250 copies of his reply printed for distribution.<sup>44</sup> Sometimes public addresses, like Kennedy's, elicited a strong response. In this instance it riled the Catholics, who took pride in the founding legend. Kennedy's address, which was published soon after his rejection by Baltimore voters, worsened his bruised ego. Denied the role he thought he deserved in public affairs, he withdrew to the world of letters, where he knew he would not be overlooked.

On 6 April 1850 the society sponsored its first annual dinner at the Exchange Hotel, an elaborate affair that united the members and invited guests in a celebration of Maryland history. The dinner also gave members an opportunity to affirm publicly their identity as gentleman scholars. Their guest list included some of the brightest names of the day. Seventy men attended, but the society invited many more—Henry Clay, Lewis Cass, and Thomas Hart Benton from the U.S. Senate; Robert Winthrop from the House of Representatives; Reverdy Johnson, President Taylor's attorney general; and Boston historians William Prescott and George Ticknor all declined. The dinner nevertheless received extensive coverage in the *Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*. The paper quoted at length the remarks, and especially the toasts, of the members. Latrobe offered a long toast to the British minister, Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer,<sup>45</sup> during which he reflected on the relationship between America and Britain. History, he said, was nothing more than the story of one family. The differences between the British and the Americans fade away the further back one traces. "The children of one great family," said Latrobe about the effects of the Revolution, "have been separated; that is all." With that the members and invited guests clinked glasses to Sir Bulwer's health.<sup>46</sup>

Kennedy, who presided over the dinner, left nothing to chance. On Sunday the seventh, as he recorded in his journal, he spent the morning preparing a report of the proceedings of the dinner for the newspaper. On Tuesday he wrote that the newspapers "contain long and full reports." "The dinner has produced a pleasant sensation in the town," he said, "and I have no doubt will do good to the Society."<sup>47</sup>

The dinner's success encouraged the society to try again the following year. Sir Henry was again in attendance, this time as the honored guest. Two letters attest to the apparent good time the night before. Sir Henry wrote to Kennedy the next morning and asked to see Kennedy's report on the dinner before he sent it to the papers. "[F]or to say the truth," Henry confessed, "I dont half know what I said or did not say last night." Lady Bulwer wrote a letter of her own. "Sir Henry," she informed Kennedy, "is very unwell this morning with one of his headaches."<sup>48</sup> Sir Henry, it seems, toasted one too many times.

Bulwer had his own reasons for wanting to know what he said before reading it in the papers. A young Daniel Jenifer was cautioned by society member John Barney

to “leave with JP Kennedy such remarks as you desire to appear in print—otherwise the *Reporter* may misrepresent you.” Barney told Jenifer that in his own remarks, which he would submit, he would compose an introduction for him with “reference to your political and Diplomatique services—your social virtues & estimable character.” The newspaper account read like a script:

A veteran in legislation and diplomacy, he blooms in the freshness of unfading youth, the accomplished gentleman, whose social virtues and inestimable character have secured to him the esteem and confidence of all his contemporaries. I give you, sir—Daniel (of St. Thomas) Jenifer—not less distinguished in the councils of his own State than for his services in the general cause of the Union. He does honor to the patriot name he bears.<sup>49</sup>

Members were conscious of the ways in which they presented themselves to the public. The care they took in composing elaborate toasts and writing their own “press releases” indicates the seriousness with which they went about their business.

Lest we dismiss them as self-serving elites, we should recognize that a sense of duty and service pervaded their enterprise. Many felt that an age of irreverence and flux demanded the tempering effects of gentlemanly leadership. At the same time, their pronouncements betrayed a sense of anxiety about the role they ought to play in society. Gulian Verplanck, a New Yorker of that city’s upper crust, held an honorary membership in the Maryland Historical Society. He cautioned gentlemen that their position naturally involved them in public affairs.<sup>50</sup> The members of the historical society translated that remark into a healthy respect for the past. To be useful, they went about the task of collecting dusty records and preserving them.

In an age captured by seemingly endless progress, members of the historical society must have seemed an anomaly. While sharing in the general enthusiasm for Baltimore’s future, men like Kennedy, Latrobe, Dobbin, and Lucas nevertheless were part of that “small yet vocal group of antebellum Americans” who lamented the indifference to the past.<sup>51</sup> Men of the historical society were boosters of a different kind. They took rightful pride in what Baltimore had become and what it promised, but believed that the real source of pride lay in the past.

They endeavored to promote civic pride and saw that the historical society undertook important work to this end. They also hoped, many expected, the public would express its gratitude for their efforts at rescuing materials before they “flit into chaos and [become] dissipated into misty legend.” Charles Mayer, the brother of Brantz, described members’ task as “a pious stewardship.” Members served as “the wardens of Maryland’s historic lore and the Ministers of her fame,” he said. “As such they may claim to be cherished by the people of Maryland.” A spirit of noblesse oblige pervaded their thinking. The society accepted it as a duty to care for the historic record. “[W]e fully understand and perform the obligation,” wrote Kennedy, “which our position has cast upon us.”<sup>52</sup> Their comments also betray their anxiety over defining a proper place for themselves in the cultural world of antebellum Baltimore.

In any event, their anxiety spurred them to action. Not only in correspondence but also in public addresses, members spoke of the rewards Maryland's virtuous past brought to the state. To commemorate the founding of the society, Charles Mayer addressed the members in an inaugural discourse of June 1844. "We all must feel solicitous to award to her [Maryland] her appropriate rank in the civilized world," he wrote,

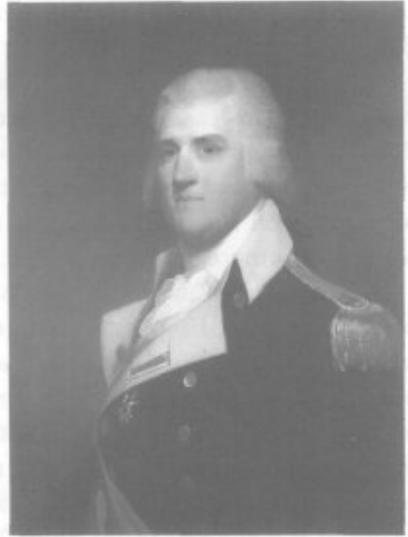
and especially among the States who have by arduous toil and patient energy achieved their eminence. The honours of our State—her just merits—are to be shown in the virtues of her course—the fortitude and wisdom which have borne her through trials—and in her best care and culture of her Republic.<sup>53</sup>

The Revolution and its leaders summoned the pens of more than a few members. In the middle decades of the nineteenth century the sons of the revolutionary generation worried that they were somehow failing the founding fathers. The flood of books and essays about the founders was a response to the "psychic pressure" many of them felt.<sup>54</sup> William F. Giles's address in 1866 typifies that impulse. The memory of Maryland's founding fathers, he argued, "we should treasure up; and we should ever feel that it is a duty we owe them, for what they did, to make their names and lives familiar as household words."<sup>55</sup>

Monuments and panegyrics to revolutionary-era generals and the colony's founders characterized much of the historical activity in the period. History, for many, was largely celebratory, especially as it applied to the elan of military men and the sagacity of their leadership. Abundant praise fell on Washington. Robert Mills described him as a man formed by "a most extraordinary assemblage of moral & intellectual endowments." He was, he continued, a man of "exemplary deportment, active zeal & uncommon performances." The Washington monument Mills proposed would, he said, be "as perfect a model of human excellence in the aggregate as has appeared among men since the Savior of the world."<sup>56</sup> Other men received similar, though less exuberant, eulogies. It is rare in this period to find a critical essay on an American personage. The world had its tyrants, to be sure, but Verplanck summed up American history nicely. It is, he wrote in 1819, "almost exclusively dedicated to the memory of the truly great."<sup>57</sup>

Whether they uttered the names of revolutionary founders or not, the presence of at least one, Washington, loomed quite literally over Baltimore. From nearly any of the rooftops in the city, Baltimoreans could see the Washington Monument in Howard's woods a mile north of downtown. Seated on the high grounds of the city and reaching a height of 170 feet, the Doric column in classical simplicity supported a larger-than-life-size statue of Washington resigning his commission in Annapolis. The idea for the pose came from Robert Mills, the architect who designed the monument. In his initial suggestion to the board of managers (including Robert Gilmore, Jr., and Fielding Lucas, Jr.), he wrote: "As this interesting Scene took place in Maryland and as Maryland first erects a public Testimony of her Gratitude to the Hero, it may present itself as a subject for Consideration." Though the overall design of the monument changed from Mills's first sketches, this idea, which

Gen. Samuel Smith. Portrait by Michael Laty after Gilbert Stuart. Gift of John Spear Smith and others, October 1844.



Charles Carroll of Carrollton. Copy by Michael Laty, c. 1846, of portrait attributed to R. Field. Gift of Mrs. McTavish, 1846.

John Eager Howard. Portrait by Michael Laty after Charles Willson Peale. Gift of James and Charles Howard, April 1846.



Early gallery acquisitions of the Maryland Historical Society included portraits of revolutionary statesmen and military heroes.

presented a uniquely Maryland connection with the most revered of the founding fathers, survived.<sup>58</sup>

Other monuments were raised, or at least suggested. The Maryland regiment that stalled the British assault on Baltimore in 1814 at North Point was honored with the Battle Monument. Erected in 1815 at a cost of \$60,000, the pure-white monument rested on a broad base with a central shaft eighteen layers of stone high. (There were eighteen states in the Union at the time of the battle.) The names of those who died were inscribed on it.<sup>59</sup>

Baltimore's reputation as the "Monumental City" notwithstanding, there were monuments that simply did not get built. The Maryland Historical Society was particularly eager to raise a monument to Baron de Kalb, a German immigrant who led Maryland troops against the British in the Revolution. In 1780 he died from wounds received in Camden, South Carolina. John Spear Smith pleaded that a monument be erected to de Kalb's memory. Erecting monuments, Smith said, had caught the interest of the public. "States and individuals are now taking pride," he wrote in a memorial of de Kalb, "in thus erecting and handing to future times, Memorials of the generous sacrifices and patriotic deeds of those States men and heroes, who wrought out our independence, and established our liberties." He thought it a shame that Baltimore had not done its duty to the memory of the baron. Writing to Maryland state senator James A. Pearce in 1858, he estimated the cost of a memorial to de Kalb to be near \$20,000. "This Society would undertake the whole affair if thought advisable," he said.<sup>60</sup> Monuments were another form of competition with other states. By giving their names to the support of a monument the society upheld its filial responsibility and allied itself with the state's past glory.

Members believed their activities in collecting history were another form of service they provided for Baltimore. J. Morrison Harris wrote on the society's behalf to state senator Charles M. Keyser asking for state papers, including the proceedings of the colonial council, for its collection. "Our request springs from no [illegible] or selfish desire to be the mere *custodians* of historic documents," he confessed, "but is prompted by the earnest wish to avail ourselves of the apparent means of gratifying an enlarged and honorable state pride, by storing up the materials of a full and correct state history." Acknowledging receipt of a memoir of Capt. William Beatty, the corresponding secretary said that "the details of events of national importance with which the sons of Maryland are connected, and everything tending to throw light upon Revolutionary history, and bring out into stronger [sic] the gallant services of the 'Old Line' cannot fail to be prized by our Maryland Society."<sup>61</sup>

The obsession to collect seized many members of the Maryland Historical Society. Letters in the files of the corresponding secretary attest to the society's earnestness in plying legislators to grant them custody of state papers. Brantz Mayer in 1847 requested that fellow society member John Pendleton Kennedy, then Speaker of the House of Delegates, encourage the legislators to act on their 1846 resolution transferring records of the proceedings of the colonial assembly to the society. Mayer promised their safe keeping. The Athenaeum building into which the society would move contained a fireproof vault for documents.<sup>62</sup>



One of the society's earliest gallery accessions: Robert Cary Long's watercolor of the Washington Monument and Howard's Park, 1829.

The society searched beyond Annapolis. Many of the documents pertaining to Maryland's colonial history filled shelves in European archives. Jared Sparks, a preeminent collector and editor of American documents, received a letter from Mayer in 1844. Sparks had scoured American and European archives and published more than sixty volumes of material, including twelve volumes of diplomatic correspondence from the American Revolution. Mayer, of course, knew all this and wrote Sparks asking for items of historic interest to Maryland that he might have come across in Europe. The society recently had obtained material from the "Jesuit college of Rome," he said, and hoped to add records from England's archives.<sup>63</sup> Mayer asked specifically about Maryland's founding family, the Calverts. "A sketch of the Baltimores and the early Maryland settlements," he prodded Sparks, "would form a very interesting chapter in your Library of America worthies."<sup>64</sup>

The society eagerly sought the personal papers of other "worthies." When Mayer got wind of the intention of the Williams family to divide the papers of Otho Holland Williams among his descendants, he acted. A Revolutionary War officer who led Maryland regulars in the 1780 southern campaign against the British, Williams later served as federal customs collector in the port of Baltimore. Mayer dispatched a letter to Williams's grandson in late 1844 cautioning him that the papers ought to be "religiously preserved." "Let me beg you not to divide them," he wrote, "it would

be like cutting up a pretty woman among a lot of rivals—and giving her hand to one man and her hips to another.”<sup>65</sup> Mayer requested that the papers be deposited with the society for safe keeping.

Mayer emphasized the importance of collecting for history. In his 1867 discourse to the membership, he pleaded with his colleagues to preserve materials on the Revolution, the War of 1812, and even the recent Civil War. To the members of the society’s library committee, he charged the responsibility of assembling those materials. “Let them regard nothing as too trifling for preservation,” he said, “for *the truth* may be concealed in a rejected trifle.”<sup>66</sup>

Because documents revealed the truths of history, saving that record from time’s ravages spawned a sense of urgency. Those who examined the journals of the Maryland council in the seventeenth century, for example, knew delay spelled doom for many old records. David Ridgely, state librarian during the 1820s and 1830s, began the task of locating and cataloging scattered public documents. Many records were lost. Some that remained were too tattered to serve any useful end. The council records for 1666 disintegrated when Ridgely handled them.<sup>67</sup>

Kennedy, who enlisted Ridgely’s help in locating sources for *Rob of the Bowl*, was keenly aware of the fragile state of many documents. He must have remembered Ridgely’s luck when he wrote in 1845 that “Much [historical material] is still within our reach though fast dissolving into dust.” He commended the society for its prodigious efforts thus far in salvaging the past. “This Society has come into existence just in time,” he said, “to rescue some of the fragments of our youthful annals from irrevocable oblivion; too late to save the whole.”<sup>68</sup>

Saving those fragments meant publishing them. Printing collections of documents enjoyed the double value of diffusing knowledge and preventing the loss of treasures. Most historical societies published proceedings that contained minutes, membership lists, news, and (most importantly) manuscripts owned by the society. Members became familiar with the contents of the collections and took pride in knowing that those particular records remained available for history’s sake.

The Maryland Historical Society joined its sister institutions half-heartedly in their publishing endeavors. Besides Charles Carroll of Carrollton’s 1776 journal, which the society published in 1846, few other manuscripts were issued. The society lacked funds to cover printing costs, but it did disseminate copies of some of the papers members wrote and delivered before the monthly meetings. Not until the 1880s, when sufficient state support came to its assistance, did the society begin publishing the *Archives of Maryland*.<sup>69</sup>

The thirty-eight year delay from the society’s inception in 1844 to the first volume of the *Archives* in 1882 caused some degree of embarrassment. President John Spear Smith lamented to Henry Dawson, who wrote seeking material on Maryland’s Revolutionary War history, that none of the documents had been published. Four years later, in 1862, corresponding secretary Edwin Dalrymple confessed that the society “has not, as yet, published anything of magnitude.”<sup>70</sup> The melancholy hints at the sense of failure in not fulfilling their duty.



Members nevertheless went about the enterprise of history with purpose. The early history of the society suggests that the founders were less interested in fleeing from a restless working class than in defining a public role for themselves. They identified with a social and cultural grouping best understood as “gentlemanly,” which to them implied serious obligations. Buoyed by the memory of the revolutionary generation, they made it their duty to serve as caretakers of Maryland’s past. Enriched by a sense of obligation and duty, they collected the papers and other records, raised monuments and wrote history for the edification of the next generation. Members often said that history taught moral lessons especially valuable to young men. The past engendered respect and propriety in those who studied it and made them better judges of character. William Giles encouraged younger members to write up the history of Maryland’s worthies. “There is no surer way of re-kindling the fires of patriotism in our own bosoms,” he told them, “than by the study of the lives and sacrifices of the great statesmen and heroes of the past generation.”<sup>71</sup> The monument to Washington, Mills hoped, would “excite in the minds of ingenious youth an ambition to deserve by great achievements that fame, which is sanctioned by the purest virtue & can be obtained only by a series of arduous & unwearied labors.”<sup>72</sup>

## NOTES

1. *Constitution, By-Laws, Charter, Circular and Charter Members of the Maryland Historical Society* (Baltimore, 1844), pp. 15–17.
2. Quoted in Jerry E. Patterson, “Brantz Mayer, Man of Letters,” *MdHM*, 52 (1957): 281.
3. Walter Muir Whitehill, “Early Learned Societies in Boston and Vicinity,” in Alexandra Oleson and Sanborn C. Brown, eds., *The Pursuit of Knowledge in the Early American Republic: American Scientific and Learned Societies from Colonial Times to the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 153.
4. See Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992; Vintage Books edition, 1993), pp. 207–8.
5. Stuart C. Sherman, “The Library Company of Baltimore, 1795–1854,” *MdHM*, 39 (1944): 14–15.
6. Bushman, *Refinement of America*, pp. 83–89. See also Samuel Miller, *A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* (2 vols; New York: T & J Swords, 1803).
7. Thomas Bender, *New York Intellect* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), pp. 71–72. The New York Lyceum of Natural History, which was professional in its orientation, consistently denied membership to De Witt Clinton, gentleman leader of New York society and politics, because he was thought to lack proper scientific credentials.
8. Whitehill, “Early Learned Societies in Boston and Vicinity,” p. 167.

9. Charles H. Bohner, *John Pendleton Kennedy: Gentleman from Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p. 36. See also Van Wyck Brooks, *The World of Washington Irving* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1944), pp. 30-33; Elaine G. Breslaw, ed. *Records of the Tuesday Club of Annapolis, 1745-1775* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); John Earle Uhler, "The Delphian Club: A Contribution to the Literary History of Baltimore in the Early Nineteenth Century," *MdHM*, 20 (1925): 308 and passim.

10. Uhler, "The Delphian Club," p. 330.

11. George H. Callcott, *History in the United States, 1800-1860: Its Practice and Purpose* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 44.

12. See Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), pp. 32-33 and Bender, *New York Intellect*, pp. 38-40.

13. This impulse followed an eighteenth-century genteel tradition of maintaining rooms in taverns for social activities. See Bushman, *Refinement of America*, pp. 160-64.

14. John Spear Smith, Annual Report, in Minutes, 3 February 1848, Maryland Historical Society Archives and Papers (hereafter MHSA), Ms. 2008, box 43, Manuscripts Division, Maryland Historical Society (MdHS).

15. Leslie Dunlap, *American Historical Societies, 1790-1860* (Madison: privately printed, 1944; reprinted Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1974), p. 167. Dunlap quotes a letter by Mayer indicating the initiation fee to be \$10. The constitution of the society listed the fee at \$5.

16. *Constitution . . . of the Maryland Historical Society*, p. 3.

17. Donald Scott, "The Popular Lecture and the Creation of a Public in Mid-Nineteenth Century America," *Journal of American History*, 66 (1980): 796-97. See also Carl Bode, *The American Lyceum: Town Meeting of the Mind* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1956). A helpful source book containing various lyceum lectures is Kenneth Walter Cameron, ed. *The Massachusetts Lyceum During the American Renaissance: Materials for the Study of the Oral Tradition in American Letters: Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne and Other New-England Lecturers* (Hartford: Transcendental Books, 1969).

18. Philip English Mackey, ed. *A Gentleman of Much Promise: The Diary of Isaac Mickle, 1837-1845* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977). On 3 February 1843 Mickle recorded his meeting with Ralph Waldo Emerson. He reluctantly called on "the lion," he wrote, "because my boots were not blacked as they should have been to receive an introduction into such distinguished presence." Mickle relaxed when he saw that Emerson's shoes "were more rusty even than my own. We literati," he observed, "do not care for such small things!" See vol. 2, p. 353.

19. See Edward Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1827-1927* (2 vols.; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), 1:44 and passim.

20. Gary L. Browne, *Baltimore in the Nation, 1789-1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), p. 139.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

22. Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 51.

23. Biographical information for members of the society comes from a variety of sources. The Dielman-Hayward File at the MdHS is an alphabetical collection of biographical material on Marylanders cut from Maryland newspapers beginning around 1800. Much of the information on members comes from memorials or obituaries contained in this file. The Baltimore City Directory provides addresses and occupations. For Kennedy see, Bohner's biography and his "As Much History as . . . Invention": John P. Kennedy's *Rob of the Bowl*," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 17 (1960): 329-40; William S. Osborne, "John Pendleton Kennedy's *Horse Shoe Robinson*: A Novel with 'The Utmost Historical Accuracy,'" *MdHM*, 59 (1964): 286-96. Numerous contemporary accounts exist. See S. L. C., "Kennedy's Life of William Wirt," *Southern Literary Messenger*, 16 (April 1850): 206-9 and "John P. Kennedy," *Harper's*, 25 (August 1862): 335-40. For Mayer, see Patterson, "Brantz Mayer, Man of Letters," pp. 275-89. For Latrobe see *Baltimore: Its History and Its People*, vol. 2 Biography, (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1912), pp. 393-96. For Wallis see William Cabell Bruce, *Seven Great Baltimore Lawyers* (privately published, 1931) and Carl Bode, *Maryland: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978). For general information see Whitman H. Ridgway, *Community Leadership in Maryland, 1790-1840: A Comparative Analysis of Power in Society* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979).

24. See William R. Johnson, *Schooled Lawyers: A Study in the Clash of Professional Cultures* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), pp. 24-25.

25. Bohner, *John Pendleton Kennedy*, pp. 26-27; *Baltimore: Its History and Its People*, pp. 393-94.

26. Quoted in Bohner, *John Pendleton Kennedy*, pp. 172-73.

27. Joseph W. Cox, "The Origins of the Maryland Historical Society: A Case Study in Cultural Philanthropy," *MdHM*, 74 (1979): 106; John P. Kennedy to George Peabody, n. d., John P. Kennedy Papers, microfilm reel 26, MdHS.

28. Bruce, *Seven Great Baltimore Lawyers*, pp. 23, 30; Bode, *Maryland*, p. 85.

29. John Sumner to Cornelius Thompson, 24 November 1853, Vertical File, Manuscripts Division, MdHS.

30. Brantz Mayer to Alexander Vattermare, 25 July 1846, Vattermare Papers, Ms. 1452, MdHS.

31. See n. 25 for sources and Friday Club Minutes, Ms. 378, and Bench and Bar Society of Baltimore, May 1824, Vertical File, Manuscripts Division, MdHS.

32. See Nathan Reingold, "Definitions and Speculations: The Professionalization of Science in America in the Nineteenth Century," in Oleson, *Pursuit of Knowledge*, pp. 33-69.

33. Callcott, *History in the United States*, p. 59.

34. Minutes, 7 February 1850, MHSA, box 43, MdHS.

35. See John E. Uhler, "Fielding Lucas, Jr., and Early Baltimore" under Lucas in the Dielman-Hayward File, MdHS.

36. New Orleans Board of School Directors to Brantz Mayer, 14 March 1857; Mayer to Board, March 1857; Mayer to D. F. Mitchell, 22 December 1857, Brantz Mayer Papers, Ms. 581.1., MdHS.
37. One of the few achievements of Kennedy's tenure as secretary of the navy in Millard Fillmore's administration was encouraging Commodore Matthew Perry's expedition to Japan. See, Bohner, *John Pendleton Kennedy*, p. 206.
38. Minutes, 1 June, 5 October, and 2 November 1848, MHSA, box 43, MdHS.
39. Patterson, "Brantz Mayer," pp. 277-80.
40. John P. Kennedy, *Discourse on the Life and Character of George Calvert, the First Lord Baltimore* (Baltimore: printed by John Murphy, 1846), pp. 15, 24.
41. John P. Kennedy, Journal, 1 March 1846, microfilm reel 1, MdHS.
42. For example, Campbell writes to Read: "The topography in *Rob of the Bowl* is very correct-& I consider it the only thing good in the book" (Bernard U. Campbell to William George Read [12 February 1842], Read Papers, Ms. 1400, MdHS).
43. Bernard U. Campbell, *Review of the Honorable John P. Kennedy's Discourse on the Life and Character of George Calvert, the First Lord Baltimore* (Baltimore: printed by John Murphy, 1846); Kennedy, *Reply of J. P. Kennedy to the Review of His Discourse... published in the U.S. Catholic Magazine, April 1846* (Baltimore: printed by John Murphy, 1846), pp. 5-6.
44. Kennedy Journal, 23 July 1846, microfilm reel 1, MdHS.
45. Sir Henry Bulwer Lytton's name appears as Lytton Bulwer in the newspaper account and on the membership roster.
46. Clipping from the *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 9 April 1850 in MdHS Dinner Records, Ms. 1366.1, MdHS.
47. Kennedy, Journal, 7 April 1850 and 9 April 1850, microfilm reel 1, MdHS.
48. Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer to John P. Kennedy, 11 May 1851; Lady Bulwer to Kennedy, 11 May 1851, MdHS Dinner Records.
49. John Barney to Daniel Jenifer, 11 May 1851; unidentified newspaper account, MdHS Dinner Records.
50. See Bender, *New York Intellect*, pp. 169-71.
51. Kammen, *Mystic Chords*, p. 60.
52. Charles F. Mayer, *First Discourse before the Maryland Historical Society* (Baltimore: printed by John D. Toy, 1844), pp. 4, 29; Kennedy, "Calvert," p. 1.
53. Charles Mayer, *First Discourse*, p. 27.
54. Michael Kammen, *A Season of Youth: The American Revolution and the Historical Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 50.
55. William F. Giles, *The Annual Address, Delivered Before the Maryland Historical Society, December 17, 1866* (Baltimore: printed by John Murphy & Co., 1867), p. 15.
56. Robert Mills, Notes of November 1813 reprinted in "Robert Mills and the Washington Monument in Baltimore," *MdHM*, 34 (1939): 152.
57. "Verplanck's Discourse," *North American Review*, 8 (March 1819): 445.
58. Mills to the board of managers of the Washington Monument, reprinted in *MdHM*, 34 (1939): 156.
59. Unidentified newspaper account in Battle Monument Papers, Ms. 1198, MdHS.

60. John Spear Smith, "Memoir of the Baron de Kalb" read before the Society 7 January 1858; Smith to James A. Pearce, 10 March 1858, MHSA, box 46, MdHS.
61. J. Morrison Harris to Charles M. Keyser, n.d.; Harris to C. Adam Beatty, 7 September 1847, MHSA, box 46, MdHS.
62. Brantz Mayer to John P. Kennedy, 14 January 1847, MHSA, box 46, MdHS.
63. It was a practice of states to appropriate funds to copy documents in foreign archives. Often a gentlemen in Europe on diplomatic errands was requested to perform this service. John H. Alexander was funded in 1858 to copy Maryland material in Rome and London; see Cox, "Manuscript's Division," pp. 411-12.
64. Brantz Mayer to Jared Sparks, 25 November 1844, MHSA, box 46, MdHS.
65. Brantz Mayer to W. Williams, 16 December 1844, MHSA, box 46, MdHS.
66. Mayer, "History," 25 (emphasis in original).
67. Cox, "Manuscripts," p. 410; Bohner, *John Pendleton Kennedy*, 101.
68. Kennedy, "Calvert."
69. Cox, "Manuscripts," pp. 412-13.
70. John Spear Smith to Henry B. Dawson, 27 January 1858; Edwin Dalrymple to G. T. L. Hirsche, 12 July 1862, MHSA, box 46, MdHS.
71. Giles, "Annual Address," p. 22.
72. Mills, November 1813, in *MdHM*, 34 (1939): 152.

# Being a Renaissance Man in Nineteenth-Century Baltimore: John Gottlieb Morris

MICHAEL J. KURTZ

The nineteenth century was an era of radical changes in how men viewed God, nature, history, and society. The career of one of Baltimore's most respected clergymen and civic leaders, John Gottlieb Morris, provides an interesting perspective on some of the sociological and intellectual changes that transformed American society. During his sixty-nine-year career (1827–1895), Morris was at the forefront of events that altered the nature of the Lutheran Church in America. He was a pioneer in founding one of the first planned suburban communities in the United States—the town of Lutherville. Morris was an important leader in the development and growth of several major regional and national cultural institutions, including the Maryland Historical Society, the Peabody Institute, the Lutheran Seminary and College at Gettysburg, and the Smithsonian Institution.

Morris was also a prolific author and lecturer. His diverse intellectual interests encompassed Martin Luther, the Reformation, Maryland history, the contributions of German immigrants to American life, and the scientific fields of botany, entomology, and geology. Though not renowned as an innovative thinker, Morris approached his subjects with a disciplined mind, a determination to separate fact from myth, and a desire to educate. His continuing stream of books, articles, and lectures helped spread religious, historical, and scientific information to the ever expanding ranks of the educated reading public.



Before delving into Morris's complex life and era, a few words on his family background and early formative experiences are in order. John Gottlieb Morris was born in York, Pennsylvania, on 14 November 1803. He was the last child and the third surviving son born to John Samuel Gottlieb Morris and Barbara Myers Morris. Both of John Gottlieb's parents were lifelong members of the Lutheran Church. Their youngest son was baptized on 8 January 1804 in York's Christ Lutheran Church. John Gottlieb's father was a German immigrant, who migrated to the

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colonies to fight for American independence. After the Revolution the senior Morris settled in York, began a successful medical practice, and married Barbara Myers an orphaned young woman originally from Baltimore County. Dr. Morris died when his youngest son was five years old. He bequeathed to his family a considerable fortune, as well as the memory of a man with an inquisitive mind and a lively personality.<sup>1</sup>

John Gottlieb's mother and his oldest brother, Charles, were the dominant influences of his early years and long after. Charles Morris, who served briefly as a Lutheran minister and founded a successful pharmaceutical company in York, was the young John Gottlieb's guardian. Under Charles's direction, John Gottlieb studied at York Academy and attended college, first at Princeton and then graduating from Dickinson in 1823.<sup>2</sup> During his years at York Academy and in college, the young Morris began to demonstrate linguistic skills that enabled him to master German, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and French. He loved books and plays and read voraciously. Besides his intellectual ability, Morris was "companionable," as he later noted in his autobiography, *Life Reminiscences of an Old Lutheran Minister*.<sup>3</sup>

Though the twenty-year-old graduate was well educated, sociable, and financially secure, Morris was unsure about his future. With his background, John Gottlieb could have gone into business, pursued his intellectual interests in an academic career, or become a gentleman of leisure involved in various civic and literary enterprises. Instead, he decided on a career as a minister in the Lutheran Church—a church that was overshadowed by larger Protestant bodies, and one which played a relatively minor role in the American cultural life of the day.

Young Morris had not heretofore expressed an interest in church work or experienced a "conversion," but his decision was perhaps not surprising. For Morris, the example of his beautiful and religious mother was always with him. He wrote in his autobiography that in matters of morality and attending worship services, he always "remembered my mother."<sup>4</sup> Morris himself gave the best description of the motivation that sustained him throughout a lifelong commitment:

There was nothing supernatural or even extraordinary in the circumstances of this, my "call to the ministry." I thought that I had the religious qualifications—that is, I was a sincere believer, and wished to do good in the best way I could. I was in perfect health and of vigorous constitution. I had some of the attributes of a good speaker, and I thought that by culture I might make a fair preacher. I had means of my own, so that I need not be a burden on the Church; . . . . The Lutheran Church had less than 300 ministers at that time, and her sphere of activity was constantly enlarging, whilst the ministry was not multiplying in proportion. Providence had cast my lot within her limits, and I concluded that this was the field for me to work in, and I entered. . . . The Church needed my services, I thought, and I cheerfully offered them. I regarded her need as equivalent to a call from her, and hence I concluded it was the divine will.<sup>5</sup>

Because the Lutheran Church did not have a seminary, Morris's theological

training was eclectic and spotty, an experience typical for many clergymen of the period. For two years he studied in New Market, Virginia, with Samuel Simon Schmucker, perhaps the best educated Lutheran clergyman of the day. He next studied briefly with the Moravians in Pennsylvania and then spent seven months at the Presbyterian Church's Princeton Seminary.<sup>6</sup> Though he was licensed to preach by the Lutheran Synod of Maryland and Virginia in October 1826, Morris felt the need for further training. He entered the new Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg but was there only a month before a new, struggling Lutheran church in Baltimore invited him to preach. On 17 and 21 December 1826 Morris preached to the thirty-eight members of the First English Lutheran Church. The congregation was impressed by this articulate college graduate and immediately called him as permanent pastor.<sup>7</sup>

In October 1827, Morris was ordained to the ministry by the Maryland Synod of the Lutheran Church. The following month he married Eliza Hay, daughter of a prominent York family. Morris was devoted to his wife. They had ten children, of whom four daughters survived to adulthood. Eliza Hay Morris died in 1875 at age sixty-eight.

Referred to as the "Nestor" of progressive, English-speaking Lutheranism in Baltimore, Morris was primarily responsible for the transformation of the church's image in the eyes of Baltimoreans.<sup>8</sup> When he began his duties in February 1827, the only other Lutheran church was German-speaking Zion. Dogmatic and linguistic barriers kept Zion out of the mainstream of Baltimore life. To counter the image of aloofness created by the German-speaking Lutherans, Pastor Morris assiduously cultivated ties with other Protestants, sought new members for his church from all walks of life, and threw himself into various civic enterprises.<sup>9</sup> He participated in inter-denominational, as well as Lutheran, Sunday School and mission efforts and served as president of the Baltimore Ministerial Association and the Baltimore and Maryland Bible Societies.

In his thirty-three years of service at First English (1827-1860), Morris increased the congregation from a few dozen to an average of 260 communicants.<sup>10</sup> Under his guidance and inspiration, the Sunday School at First English was the catalyst for the founding of two other English-speaking Lutheran churches before the Civil War (Second and Third English). In the decades after he left First English, Morris continued active parish work with part-time calls to Third English and St. Mark's in Baltimore City and St. Paul's in Lutherville. Throughout his ministry, Morris was very active in the Maryland Synod and in the General Synod, the first national organization of Lutheran synods (established in 1820). He served seven times as president of the Maryland Synod and was twice elected president of the General Synod (1843 and 1883).<sup>11</sup>

In his work in Baltimore and in the synodical and national arenas, Morris found himself in the middle of a bitter and divisive struggle. Nineteenth-century Lutheranism was torn between "American" Lutherans, led by Samuel Simon Schmucker, who sought to deemphasize denominational differences among Protestants, and conservative German and Scandinavian immigrants, who clung to their

native languages and viewed contact with English-speaking Protestants (including other Lutherans) with deep skepticism.<sup>12</sup> From the time of his call at First English, Morris dedicated himself to fostering a Lutheran church true to its Reformation heritage, as he understood it, and one that was part of the American cultural landscape. In the early years of his ministry, he was a follower of Schmucker, and he seemed comfortable with Schmucker's goal of creating a general, all-Protestant, evangelical union.<sup>13</sup>

During the 1840s and 1850s, the tide of religiously conservative immigrants led to the creation of many new Lutheran synods, such as the Missouri Synod, whose members doubted the orthodoxy of the English-speaking General Synod and refused to join the national group. Pastor Morris and other leaders grew increasingly worried about the developing split in the church. It became evident Schmucker's union would not take place and that Schmucker's efforts would only lead to a further alienation of conservative Lutherans. Morris's great fear was that, by clinging to their native tongue in church, home, and school, the Lutheran immigrants were consigning their church to eventual oblivion.<sup>14</sup> He devoted much of his talent and energy to thwarting this possibility.

Morris broke ranks with Schmucker in 1855, when he engineered a movement to get the various Lutheran synods in America to rescind or repeal their adherence to the Augsburg Confession, the prime Lutheran doctrinal statement of the sixteenth century. Morris realized that if Schmucker succeeded in his repeal effort, any hope of uniting all Lutherans and converting the immigrants to English-speaking church life was doomed, and he helped prevent the Maryland Synod from supporting Schmucker. Morris and his allies also lobbied other synods to reject Schmucker's appeal. Only three small Ohio synods voted to support Schmucker, thus effectively killing what critics labeled "modern American Puritanism."<sup>15</sup>

After Schmucker's defeat, Morris tried to draw Lutherans together. His efforts to build unity included sponsorship of the "cent-a-day" contribution plan for home mission work (designed to reach Lutherans and non-Lutherans), fostering the development of a common Lutheran liturgical service, and leading the first major effort at intra-Lutheran dialogue. In 1877 and 1878, Morris and one of his clerical allies, Joseph A. Seiss, organized two diets or meetings in Philadelphia to discuss the common bonds that united Lutherans. At the 1877 diet, Morris presented a major paper on the Augsburg Confession. This paper exhibits a good deal about Morris's



Nineteenth-century engraving of Pastor John Gottlieb Morris. (Courtesy of Helen Berry.)

opinions and scholarship. The most important commentaries Morris used were a series of lectures by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Philip Schaff's *Creeds of Christendom*. Schaff a prominent mid-century church historian, advocated a strict sense of confessional identity. By this point, such an approach was quite congenial to Morris and many other American Protestants. Using secondary sources, Morris traced the impact of German Lutheranism on the development of English Protestantism under the Tudors. He took care to identify similarities in doctrine and liturgical practices and agreed with Seiss that the Lutheran church was the "mother of Protestants."<sup>16</sup> In attributing the place of honor in Protestant theology and history to the Augsburg Confession, Morris reminded his listeners of one of the major ties that bound them.

Though careful in his use of facts and interpretation of events in all his works on the Reformation, Luther, and other religious themes, Morris's motivation was pastoral, not purely scholarly. He wanted to inspire in his readers a greater devotion to the church and loyalty to her principles and practices. In this his works are similar to those of most other Protestants in the first two-thirds of the century.<sup>17</sup> As his career developed, Morris came to believe his basic contribution to the church was the preservation of a Lutheran identity, one which would reflect his vision of an English-speaking Lutheranism adaptive to the American environment and faithful to its sixteenth-century heritage. Morris is rightfully given credit for being one of a half dozen nineteenth-century Lutheran leaders responsible for achieving this goal.<sup>18</sup> The 1988 merger of three major Lutheran churches into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America vindicates Morris's vision.



Urban life in America steadily developed and expanded throughout the nineteenth century. One aspect of this maturation was the establishment and growth of important cultural and educational institutions. Educated and civic-minded clergymen were often the leaders of these new institutions. Morris was no exception. Throughout the decades of his active church work, he also carved out for himself a significant role in local, regional, and national cultural life. Among other activities, Morris served on the first board of directors of the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery and as chairman of the school and chapel committee for the House of Refuge for Delinquent Boys.<sup>19</sup> As a civic leader, collector, and author, he was involved in five significant cultural institutions: the Maryland Historical Society (MdHS), the Peabody Institute, the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania College (now Gettysburg College), and the United States National Museum (the Smithsonian Institution). Morris's election in 1851 to membership in the MdHS marked the beginning of a long and congenial relationship and signified recognition of his position as a civic leader. From 1855, Morris was continuously involved in some aspect of managing the society. From 1855 to 1894, he served on the library committee. He was yearly reelected as vice president of the society from 1867 until 1894, and from 1892 to 1894 he held the post of librarian. In 1895 Morris

was elected president.<sup>20</sup> Throughout his lengthy association with the MdHS and other historical societies, Morris was animated by his vision of the proper role of these organizations. As he put it, a historical society should “verify doubtful facts, develop and record unwritten events, correct popular errors, authenticate disputed dates . . . delineate the character and deeds of illustrious men.”<sup>21</sup>

Morris’s principal service at the MdHS was to expand and improve the society’s library and natural science collection. In the latter part of the 1850s, he and his colleagues on the library committee worked to incorporate the holdings of the Library Company of Baltimore, which had merged with the MdHS in 1854. Before the merger the MdHS had obtained, usually through donations, 2,128 bound volumes.<sup>22</sup> By April 1861 Morris reported that the merger of the Library Company’s 4,500 volumes into the MdHS library was completed and the entire collection catalogued and arranged.<sup>23</sup>

Morris pursued other paths to enhance the society’s library. Through his efforts, Joseph Henry, first secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, provided numerous publications for the MdHS,<sup>24</sup> and Morris donated items from his own collection. These included a Robert Morris letter, a James Madison pamphlet, and a facsimile of a George Washington letter to Madison requesting him to draft a farewell address.<sup>25</sup> By 1885 Morris and the library committee noted that the society’s collection consisted of more than twenty thousand volumes and pamphlets.<sup>26</sup> Morris’s spirit and personality surfaced in a letter to the assistant librarian in June 1893. He wrote that, though illness prevented him from leaving his home in Lutherville, he expected his assistant to answer the reference letters and see to it that the staff continued rearranging and relocating the library’s books. In his inimitable fashion, Morris directed the assistant to “keep them [staff members] busy at it.”<sup>27</sup>

An avid amateur entomologist, Morris was a key figure in establishing the MdHS’s natural history collection. In several monthly society meetings in 1857, members complained that the natural history collection, mandated in the MdHS charter, was languishing.<sup>28</sup> Morris’s reputation as an excellent amateur scientist made him the obvious choice to head a committee to revitalize and expand the collection. From 1857 until 1861, Morris’s committee labored to gather Maryland flora and fauna and to purchase and install cases to house the collection. In 1860 Morris proudly noted that he had obtained donations of 319 specimens.<sup>29</sup> He also saw to it that the library continuously collected the latest works on paleontology, zoology, mineralogy, geology, and botany.<sup>30</sup>

Morris’s greatest efforts to enhance the MdHS library and natural science collection were spent in the attempted merger of the MdHS and the Peabody Institute. In this venture, Morris and the MdHS experienced both success and failure. When George Peabody established a trust in 1857 for the creation of a major cultural center in Baltimore, Morris was one of two hundred prominent citizens identified as potential trustees. One of the key provisions of the trust was that the MdHS would administer the new institute, under the general direction of a separate board of trustees. At several MdHS meetings between 1857 and 1860, Morris successfully offered motions to accept Peabody’s plan and take specific steps to implement it.<sup>31</sup>

A major element in these plans was the merger of the MdHS library and natural science collection with a similar collection the Peabody Institute would establish. As one of the prime movers in furthering the MdHS scientific and library holdings, Morris was intensely interested in the merger with the institute. In 1859, he gained appointment to fill a vacancy on the Peabody's board of trustees.<sup>32</sup> This was not surprising. Thirteen of the twenty-five trustees were also MdHS members. In furthering his goal, Morris successfully competed for election as the first librarian of the Peabody Institute in June 1860. As he noted in *Life Reminiscences*, he also felt the need for a change after thirty-three years at First English.<sup>34</sup>

With his accustomed energy, Morris began his new duties 1 August 1860. He began working on a comprehensive catalogue of books needed for the newly established library. With eight or nine clerical assistants, he combed through numerous lists and catalogues. By January 1861 he had compiled his own catalogue of fifty thousand volumes, which he recommended to the library committee of the board of trustees for purchasing.<sup>35</sup> His catalogue illustrates the breadth of his intellectual interests and knowledge. Using his French, German, and Hebrew, the new librarian recommended the acquisition of European and American works in fields as diverse as history, literature, science, drama, and theology.

With the catalogue finished and sent to booksellers and others from whom he might acquire publications, Morris turned his attention to constructing a library building and creating a staff. Over the next several years, he completed these tasks and traveled up and down the East Coast and to Europe acquiring books, periodicals, pamphlets, and maps. Morris successfully urged the Peabody Institute to support acquisition of hundreds of Civil War pamphlets advocating one position or another. As he put it, "The present troubles of the country have been the occasion of a vast number of pamphlets, which we should possess as a source of current historical facts, to any future writer or reader."<sup>35</sup> When the library formally opened to the public in 1866 it had over twenty-two thousand books and thousands of pamphlets. Through his diligence and skill, Morris ensured the success of a major component in George Peabody's temple of culture. The library, operating in accordance with Morris's directives on cataloguing books and preserving them, was on its way to becoming a major research facility.

Ultimately, Morris and the Maryland Historical Society failed to merge the society's holdings with those of the Peabody Institute. In 1866 Peabody trustees claimed their new building was not large enough to hold its own collections and those of the society. The trustees also feared that fluctuating MdHS membership and lax requirements for membership would ultimately imperil MdHS administration of the institute.<sup>37</sup> The society, which had long sought to fulfill its role in George Peabody's original plan, was understandably frustrated and angry. In a series of resolutions and correspondence, the MdHS insisted that admission requirements were not lax. In fact, any three members could blackball a prospective new member. In one particularly biting resolution, the society noted that most of the institute's trustees were MdHS members, and the institute's librarian "is one of our most respected and heeded associates."<sup>38</sup> In addition, the MdHS argued it had the same



Opening ceremonies of the Peabody Institute, 26 October 1866. (Prints and Photographs, Maryland Historical Society.)

literary, artistic, and scientific purposes as the institute. All arguments were to no avail. For reasons both political and personal, the Peabody trustees refused to permit the society to administer their operations. After some long-distance mediation by George Peabody from London, the MdHS finally accepted the impossibility of its dream.

By this point, Morris's position at the Peabody was untenable. His loyalties would have to be split between the institute and the MdHS. His dream of creating a great, unified cultural collection that would be a beacon to American intellectual life was shattered. As if this were not bad enough, Morris was incensed over the treatment he received from the one active member of the Peabody Institute's library committee. Though Morris doesn't name the individual, he was probably Charles J. M. Eaton, chairman of the committee. Morris complained he never received praise, and this man wanted a librarian who was only "a man who could manage, keep the operatives severely to their work, pay them off Saturday evening, and keep the records straight."<sup>39</sup> With relief, Morris resigned as the first librarian of the Peabody Institute effective 1 September 1867.



Morris's great labors in furthering cultural life and spreading knowledge were not restricted to the MHS and the Peabody Institute. He was actively involved in the life of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg and its companion institution, Pennsylvania College. From his first appointment as a director of the seminary in 1828 until his death in 1895, Morris served as a director for ten terms and a total of forty-eight years. He also intermittently lectured at the seminary between 1869 and 1895 on the topics of pulpit elocution and the relationship of natural science to religion.<sup>40</sup> Morris also played a long-term leadership role at Pennsylvania College. He was one of the original incorporators listed in the state charter issued to the college in 1832. Morris labored for decades to support and improve the small liberal arts college. He was the first secretary of the board of trustees and served on the board for fifty-four years (1832–1835, 1844–1895).<sup>41</sup> He rarely missed a meeting during his lengthy tenure as a director of the seminary and the college.

Morris also contributed to the college's intellectual life as a lecturer and collector of books and scientific specimens. From 1843 until 1849 he lectured on zoology, and between 1867 and 1874 he lectured on natural history. Morris, with two other men, was charged in 1834 with the task of creating a library for the college. In 1844 he helped found the Linnaean Association at the college "for the promotion of the cause of science among its members."<sup>42</sup> Morris often attended meetings of the association and regularly contributed to its journal, the first college scientific publication in America. He almost single-handedly created the association's natural history collection, or cabinet as it was known in those days. In recognition of his labors, the college's board of trustees named the cabinet after Morris.<sup>43</sup> Pennsylvania College also recognized Morris's services by awarding him honorary degrees: in divinity (1839) and laws (1875).

His avid interest in natural science, as expressed through his specimen collections, publications, and sharing of books and manuscripts from his private library, won him national recognition. Morris's 1860 *Catalogue* for the Smithsonian Institution on the Lepidoptera of North America was requested for years after its publication. His studies for the federal patent office and department of agriculture on the ailanthus silkworm of China (1861, 1862) led scientists and collectors to seek his advice into the late 1870s. The records of the Smithsonian Institution contain numerous references to Morris's correspondence with Joseph Henry, assistant secretary Spencer F. Baird, and other scientists.<sup>44</sup> Morris and his scientific colleagues exchanged information about newly acquired specimens, scientific controversies, and Morris's translations of foreign scientific works. In addition to his research and publications, Morris was an active or corresponding member of numerous national and international scientific societies.

One of the most interesting aspects of Morris's scholarly career was his participation in contemporary scientific and theological debates that sought to reconcile the biblical account of creation with new discoveries in geology and biology. He was a

prime example of a nineteenth-century phenomenon—the educated clergyman as theologian, amateur scientist, and man of letters. His philosophical perspective on God, nature, and religion was to a great extent formed through his association with Princeton College and Seminary. The philosophy taught at Princeton was Scottish Common Sense Realism. It was founded on the empirical and inductive method of the seventeenth-century philosopher Francis Bacon and sought to achieve a union of belief and knowledge—of God’s Word (the Bible) and Work (nature). It was a reaction to the philosophical skepticism of the Scottish Enlightenment. Briefly, common sense realists argued that the mind connected bits of empirical data collected by the senses through “self-evident principles” that were unverifiable but rooted in “common sense.” For example, “whatever begins to exist, must have a cause.” This was an unverifiable “fact” acceptable because it was rooted in obvious, common sense experience.<sup>45</sup> This philosophical stance was at the heart of natural theology, which was paramount in the English-speaking Protestant world in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>46</sup>

Morris’s numerous articles and lectures reveal he was a typical natural theologian. For Morris, the purpose of examining and classifying animals, minerals, or plants was to “read the book of creation which God has laid open for us, and it is an employment well becoming man, because for him were all these things made.”<sup>47</sup> Morris believed nature contained clear, compelling evidence of God’s existence and perfection. In this orderly and purposeful universe, man occupied a special place. Though man had certain anatomical similarities to animals, he was fundamentally separate and distinct because of reason, the soul, and God’s purpose.<sup>48</sup> In explaining the totality of creation, Morris followed Linnaeus, the great eighteenth-century naturalist, who viewed the world as a museum with three classes—animals, minerals, and plants. These works of the creator were organized into orders, families, genera, and species. All these relationships were systematically arranged according to God’s design.<sup>49</sup>

As did many other believing Christians of the day, Morris agreed with the views of French paleontologist Georges Cuvier, who argued that a series of natural catastrophes occurred as the earth developed. This view, known as progressive catastrophism, was an effort to reconcile emerging geological evidence contradictory to the belief that God created the world in six days. Cuvier argued that these catastrophes separated geological epochs that were analogous to the biblical six days.<sup>50</sup>

In his translation and annotation of a work (*Principles of Geology*) of a follower of Cuvier, the German professor von Leonhard, Morris agreed that all species were destroyed in each catastrophe and fossil remains not related to one another. After each catastrophe, God created new species unrelated to what had gone before.<sup>51</sup> Morris, like many other natural theologians, also believed the species known in his day had existed for the previous four thousand years, or since the end of the last catastrophe.<sup>52</sup> He supported the proposition that all species were distributed through the guidance of God, and differences among animals or various human races were due to climatic differences.<sup>53</sup>

Obviously the orderly, harmonious, divinely inspired universe of Morris and the

natural theologians had little in common with the open-ended, chance-filled world of Charles Darwin. Morris never converted to the Darwinian world view of species evolving through random natural selection and the survival of the fittest, a view that saw species evolving into new species in a violent universe whose origins were lost in eternity.<sup>54</sup> In Darwin's world it was difficult indeed to find the hand of a benevolent Creator.

Morris's contributions to the science of his day were many and varied. As an educator, Morris sought to instill in students enthusiasm for science, and he encouraged both professional and amateur scientific endeavors. Through his involvement in numerous scientific societies, Dr. Morris continually sought to spread information about the latest manuscripts published or experiments attempted. His zealous collecting of specimens and scientific publications for the MdHS and Pennsylvania College created significant centers of scientific knowledge. Though much of Morris's scientific writings might seem quaint today, his views on natural science and theology were in tune with some of the most prominent scientists and theologians of the day.



In addition to his scientific and religious publications, Dr. Morris also wrote numerous treatises on a variety of historical subjects. As true of his views on nature and science, Morris's interpretation of history was the traditional Christian view that unfolding events were basically the revealing of God's purpose. For example, Morris saw the Reformation as divinely inspired and the source of modern-day civil and religious liberties.<sup>55</sup> But Morris's historical works also contained elements of modern historical interpretation and methodology. In a major article he prepared for the *Lutheran Quarterly* on "The Young and German Luther," we find these new interpretations mixed with the old. Morris saw Luther's work of reclaiming the church as an act of Providence, a "predestinated" fact conceived in the Divine Mind and controlled by the Divine Hand. At the same time, he showed an understanding of historical causation and human psychology reflective of new trends in historical scholarship by tracing the religious, political, and intellectual dissatisfaction widespread in Europe in the one hundred years before the Reformation. Morris understood the detestation sixteenth-century Germans felt for Italian and papal control of the church. As historians do today, he analyzed the patronizing attitude of the Italians towards the Germans and the resentment that resulted.<sup>56</sup>

In the article Morris expressed an interesting psychological perspective: "Most great events in Church, state, literature, art and science, etc., have been conceived and advanced by young men." His point was that, if Luther had been twenty years older, he might have recanted or at least not continued the fight; breaking away from the heavy emotional investment of Luther's increasingly prominent role in the Augustinian Order might have caused him too much stress.<sup>57</sup> But there is an underlying contradiction in Morris's argument: If indeed Luther had been "predestinated," how could there be the possibility he might have acted otherwise?

Morris's numerous historical works on other subjects contain a similar mixture of old and new perspectives. In a pamphlet written for the MdHS, *The Lords Baltimore*, he declared it a patriotic duty to cherish the memories of the state's founders. Throughout the work, Morris offered an underlying moralistic evaluation of the Calverts, particularly Frederick, the last Lord Baltimore. In fact, he concluded with *sic transit gloria mundi*, noting that the last Baltimore descendant died in 1860 in an English debtor's prison.<sup>58</sup> This view typified an early nineteenth-century view that history's main purpose was a moral one—to edify, educate, and warn. But *The Lords Baltimore* contained other elements. Morris used numerous English and American secondary sources to piece together an accurate historical sequence. Where the sources permitted, he presented straightforward accounts of the heritage, education, and accomplishments of the Calverts. For example, he noted that Maryland's early growth was the result of Cecil Calvert's mild terms for land rent and fair treatment of the Indians. Morris filled out his portrait with extensive quotes from the correspondence of Oliver Cromwell, Robert Walpole, and Frederick the Great.<sup>59</sup>

Though many of Morris's other works could be discussed, the main contours of his approach to history are clear. He was animated by a religious and moral perspective typical of the first part of the nineteenth century, but he was also tempered by his acceptance of the changes occurring in contemporary intellectual life. These included a greater understanding of historical causation, clearer delineation of fact from myth, and the judicious handling of source material.

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# Laying the Foundations: Herbert Baxter Adams, John Thomas Scharf, and Early Maryland Historical Scholarship

PATRICIA DOCKMAN ANDERSON

The year 1991 marked the one hundredth anniversary of the Scharf donation to the Johns Hopkins University. The collection contained tens of thousands of historical artifacts—pamphlets, broadsides, manuscripts, state papers, and books. Scharf presented the gift at a time when Hopkins was the Mecca of Southern historical scholarship, and the bequest brought together two of the most influential historians in Baltimore during the closing years of the nineteenth century: John Thomas Scharf and Dr. Herbert Baxter Adams.

At first glance these men appear to be polar opposites—Scharf, the successful merchant of popular subscription history, and Adams, dynamic chairman of the Johns Hopkins history department and mentor to a dynasty of research-oriented graduate students. What common interest did they share that prompted Scharf to give his collection to Hopkins? Both historians produced their work from original source material, which was not the common and logical practice it is today. But fully to appreciate the irony of this encounter and understand the impact of the Adams-Scharf influence on Maryland history, one must go back a century to a time before materials were collected in places like the Maryland State Archives and preservation had become a science, to the infancy of history as an academic discipline.



The Johns Hopkins University opened in 1876 after nine years of planning by a group of prominent citizens who formed the corporation known as the Johns Hopkins University for the Promotion of Education in Maryland. As the defeated Confederate states struggled through postwar Reconstruction, Southern universities attempted to regain their vigor. The new university in Baltimore attracted more than its share of students from the destitute South. The Johns Hopkins endowment brought with it scholarships for Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina students who showed “character and intellectual promise.”<sup>1</sup>

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As the university's first president the trustees selected Daniel Coit Gilman, who, in accepting, described the situation as being without "political or ecclesiastical interferences." Gilman arrived at Hopkins from the University of California, where his plan for a community of scholars had failed in a region of farmers who wanted "agronomy and not philosophy."<sup>2</sup> The new position in Baltimore proved ideal. He was given free rein and chose as members of the first faculty persons who were not only brilliant but sometimes unorthodox in their teaching methods, men of promise rather than fame. After recruiting his faculty and the most advanced students, Gilman announced the Hopkins post-doctoral fellowships. Among the first to accept was Dr. Herbert Baxter Adams.

Adams was twenty-six years old when he joined the department of history, economics, and politics. His graduate studies in Heidelberg had exposed him to the scientific and systematic approaches that were transforming history from the byproduct of literature to an academic discipline in its own right. Adams's techniques took their direction from the work of Leopold Von Ranke, who stressed the value of studying original documents. Adams's training endowed him with a belief in the "germ theory" of history. This tenet of nineteenth-century German social science taught that "the state is a living organism grounded to the relationship of a people to their land." Adams also adhered to the "Teutonic thesis": the seeds of democracy lay in the institutions of early Germanic peoples.<sup>3</sup> Confidence in the validity of institutional history and training in the use of original source documents lay at the center of Adams's teaching.

The new university supplied an ideal setting for an ambitious and hungry young professor. Adams had all of the elements he needed to transform the theories he learned abroad into research enterprises. His students were bright and promising; the records of Maryland's history waited to be systematically studied.

From the beginning Adams and his students looked to local institutions for research materials. They toured Maryland historical sites and archeological excavations. They also visited the Maryland Historical Society, where Adams became involved with Hopkins professor Dr. Austin Scott and his weekly "Seminary of American History." Until 1883 Adams held his own "Seminary of History and Politics" in the rooms of the old Athenaeum, the first home of the Maryland Historical Society.<sup>4</sup>

The historical society had appeared in 1844, partly in response to the failed efforts of the Maryland State Library (now the Maryland State Law Library) to collect and preserve colonial records. As one of the society's founders, Brantz Mayer directed attention toward bringing Maryland's scattered colonial records under the care of a single agency. In 1847 the General Assembly authorized the society to "acquire and hold" original colonial documents that were in duplicate or in "apparent or manifest decay."<sup>5</sup>

For the next twenty years, both the assembly and the Maryland Historical Society made sporadic attempts to preserve and classify state papers. In 1866, with the assistance of Gov. Augustus W. Bradford, Mayer outlined a plan whereby the commissioner of the land office would bear the responsibility to "collect, arrange,

and classify the papers, relics and other memorials connected with the early history of Maryland.”<sup>6</sup>

This office also proved ineffective, however, and in 1878 Mayer again urged establishment of an agency whose sole duty would be record preservation. By Mayer’s latest plan, all state agencies would turn over to the Maryland Historical Society all records dating before 1783. The society would then preserve, arrange, and classify them as a public service. An additional clause in the 1878 petition requested publication of some of the earliest records. Mayer’s death in 1879 delayed the petition for another three years.

During those same years Adams invested much of his time and energy at the society. Within the first year of his appointment to Hopkins he researched and read his first paper based on the society’s collections.<sup>7</sup> He was by that time an associate professor, and his activity at the society secured access for his students. By November 1881 Adams was well poised to become an anonymous advocate of the Maryland State Paper Project. This effort, the realization of Brantz Mayer’s vision, resulted in an act of 1882 “to Provide for the preservation, arrangement, publication and sale of Ancient Documents pertaining to Maryland.”<sup>8</sup>

The ultimate success of this effort, often attributed to British historian Edward A. Freeman, we should credit heavily to Herbert Baxter Adams. From November 1881 to April 1882 the young professor used his appointment book as an informal diary<sup>9</sup> and chronicled his role in what would become the most successful records legislation enacted in Maryland until the state archives opened in 1934.

The diary entries begin with the arrival of Freeman in November 1881, when he visited his son in Virginia and then lectured at the Peabody Library in Baltimore and the Lowell Institute in Boston. During the years Adams studied in Heidelberg, Freeman had gained international prominence in institutional history (he was a devoted apostle of the Teutonic thesis). Freeman’s motto “History is Past Politics and Politics Present History,” Adams adopted in his seminar.<sup>10</sup>

During the ten days Freeman toured Baltimore, he lectured at Peabody and Hopkins, and Adams took him to the historical society to look at manuscripts and to gain his endorsement of the record preservation plan. At the same time another British historian, James Bryce, also visited Baltimore, and Adams took him on the same tour for the same reasons. By the end of the visits, Adams had secured letters of support from both men. Adams’s public account of the value of Freeman’s letter pays tribute to Freeman for the eventual success of the legislation. Freeman also received credit as the author of the letter that appeared in altered form the following month in the *Nation*, *Baltimore Sun*, and *Baltimore American*.<sup>11</sup>

By early December 1881, with the Freeman and Bryce letters in hand, Adams had secured the support of society member and Hopkins trustee Judge George William Brown. Adams’s diary entry simply reads “Judge Brown approves of Record Plan—VICTORY!” At a meeting of the historical society the following week, the minutes note under the heading of miscellaneous business:

Prof. Herbert Baxter Adams brought vigorous, document-oriented historical research to the Johns Hopkins University and the Maryland Historical Society. (The Johns Hopkins University.)



Judge George Wm. Brown . . . presented the draft of a memorial to be presented to the Honorable General Assembly of Md. and requested a committee of five be appointed to present a memorial of the Society, praying that the safe keeping of the Archives of the State be entrusted to it, and that the sum of \$1000 annually for five years be appropriated for the publication of such papers as are of general interest.<sup>12</sup>

At the same meeting, Judge Brown nominated Edward A. Freeman and James Bryce for honorary membership. Adams's diary for that day reads "Historical Society accepted the Memorial—Good!"<sup>13</sup>

The next day he recorded that he had "reviewed the *Calendar of Virginia State Papers* for the *Nation* and made it the text for the Maryland Records Project. The review and a commentary on the "germs" of record-publication projects which "lay in the zeal of Italian humanists like Poggio and Pope Pius II for collecting manuscripts, and the fondness of schoolmen like St. Thomas Aquinas for gathering citations" appeared in the *Nation* on 22 December. The column traced the history of archival publications from Virginia back to England and Germany. The piece closed with the announcement of the Maryland Historical Society's memorial. The following week he noted he had written to the *Sun* and the *American* on the same subject, and within days the unsigned editorials appeared in the local papers.<sup>14</sup>

Following Freeman's visit, Adams's enthusiasm and drive for the legislation rose, and he noted regular visits with Judge Brown. Adams also recorded the society's acceptance of the final text of the bill to be presented to the assembly. Early in 1882



Seminar room at the Johns Hopkins University c. 1890. (Prints and Photographs, Maryland Historical Society.)

Adams wrote, "State Paper Project thrives! [and] research booms at the Society." As the bill slowly made its way through the legislative process, Adams grew impatient. Reassurances from Judge Brown appear in the diary. Brown requested Adams to provide information on how "other states and England" secured publica-



Interior of the Maryland Historical Society's Atheneum, where members read the results of their archival research. (Prints and Photographs, Maryland Historical Society.)

tion funds from the government, and he also asked for a copy of the Virginia publication to show the committee.<sup>15</sup>

Adams's last entry on the subject appeared on 19 March, when he once again wrote an article for the *Nation* on the success of the project. (He noted that he had to revise it three times as in his excitement it had been difficult to suppress his ego.) The article that appeared in the *Nation* on 30 March detailed the collection about to be transferred and went on to praise the legislature, the historical society, and the citizens of Maryland. "The Maryland Historical Society," Adams added, "when it shall have made the archives of Maryland generally accessible to students, will be in a position to encourage original research."<sup>16</sup>

Six weeks after the Maryland State Paper Project became law, Adams was nominated for membership in the Maryland Historical Society. Until then his name does not appear in the minutes, yet entries in his diary and his correspondence make clear the link between him and the society and his part in the State Paper Project. After his election Adams became an active member of the historical society.<sup>17</sup> In October 1882 he addressed the board "expressing hope that an opportunity would now be afforded to some [of his students] to present the results of their research before the Historical Society and requesting the exchange of publications relating



Brantz Mayer in later life. (Prints and Photographs, Maryland Historical Society.)

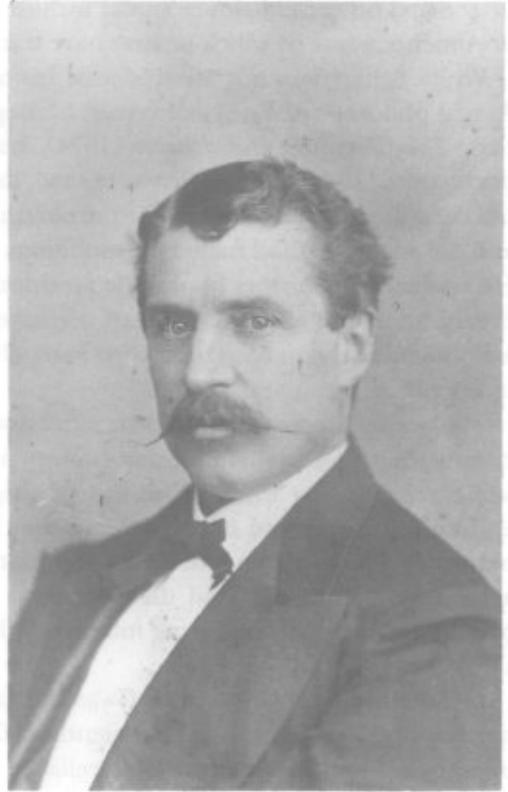
to American history." President John H. B. Latrobe extended his invitation to the students and promised cooperation with the university. The following year, at the November meeting, the publication committee presented an advance copy of the first volume of the *Archives of Maryland* to President Gilman. Gilman then gave a lengthy address praising the work and those responsible for it, including the editor, William Hand Browne, who was also a member of the Hopkins faculty. George William Brown's remarks at the end of the evening bore a distinctly Adams flavor. "Each colony has its own institutions and history," he stated, "and each contributed its share to the grand result."<sup>18</sup>

The passage of time brought firm definition to the research the Hopkins history department encouraged. Adams conducted his seminar for two hours every Friday evening in the university's Bluntchli Library. Consisting of the teaching faculty and graduate students, the group discussed and read reports of its research, which were then published in the *Johns Hopkins Studies in Historical and Political Science*. Many seminar students investigated and wrote of the political and economic institutions of Maryland and the South. Their titles included "History of State Banking in Maryland," "Churches and Religious Institutions of Maryland," and "The English in Maryland." They wrote by the rules of the new scientific school that demanded objective analysis of the records. These works lack intuitive insight, and the 367 papers produced by 1903 are a stockpile of sterile monographs. Although no formal course on Southern history officially appeared until 1897, as early as the 1890-91 session Hopkins graduate J. Franklin Jameson gave a series of ten lectures on the "Constitutional and Political History of the Southern States."<sup>19</sup>

At the historical society, Adams after 1884 served on the library committee, which kept him active acquiring, arranging, and preserving materials. In 1887 Adams enlisted a graduate student to "undertake service with the Society for the purpose of making a card catalog." Richard Applegarth agreed to accept the job for compensation of \$250. In 1892 the minutes note that a special committee including Adams and William Hand Browne had been:

instructed to report as soon as possible . . . whether it is expedient and practicable . . . to publish a Quarterly Periodical to be called the Maryland

John Thomas Scharf, in the spirit of Baltimore entrepreneurs, first made good use of Maryland historical documents before turning them over to Adams at Hopkins. (Maryland Historical Society.)



Historical Magazine . . . devoted to the publication of Ancient Documents and regional papers illustrative of the History of Maryland.<sup>20</sup>

Equally important to the society's future, Adams in 1891 (he was then a full professor at Hopkins and chairman of the history department) attracted the attention of two major collectors who wished to turn over their impressive personal archives to Hopkins. The first benefactor, attorney William Birney (son of abolitionist James Birney) asked how to donate his collection of books and pamphlets to the American Historical Association, of which Adams was a founder. Birney's concern was the accessibility of his gift to students of history. After corresponding with Adams, he donated his collection of antislavery materials to the Hopkins library.<sup>21</sup> The second inquiry came from John Thomas Scharf.



During the years that Adams built his legion of scholars at Hopkins, Scharf established himself as the leading and perhaps best known historian in Maryland. His renown stemmed from his high visibility as a veteran of the Confederate army and navy, his term in the Maryland legislature, and career moves from law practice to editorship of several local papers and finally to commissioner of the land office

in 1884. The commissioner's post included the care and cataloging of historical documents, some of which he may have transferred to his private collection.<sup>22</sup>

While Scharf was not an academic historian, his methods paralleled Adams's formal philosophy of original research. Beginning with work for his first publication, *The Chronicles of Baltimore* (1874), he amassed large quantities of original documents. In his preface he wrote that "the house of history, if we may so speak, has been literally ransacked in the unremitting search for all."<sup>23</sup> The book's success and the stated method fueled the ambitions of this young, self-confident journalist. He made writing history books into an entrepreneurial venture that was a model of organization and efficiency. Scharf employed a team of ghost writers who went on assignment and sent back their copy in much the same way a reporter sends in copy to his editor.

The hesitant interpretation that critics noted in Scharf's early works matured; he became master of a rhythmic and flowery prose that wove one event into another while reproducing mass quantities of original source material. Scharf's style epitomized the appeal of the subscription historian's work. He wrote about the heroes of Maryland and their contributions to the state while he praised their achievements and flattered their families. Prominent Maryland citizens, whose portraits and biographies were interspersed throughout the text financed publication costs.

Despite his popularity, Scharf was the target of academic historians from the beginning of his career. In "unscientific" fashion his opinions wormed their way into his text—despite his reportorial reliance on original documents. When he wrote of Maryland during the years before the Civil War, his prose reflected the level head of a seasoned attorney and journalist. When he reached the War of the Rebellion, his logic twisted and the reader witnessed the bitterness Scharf carried with him after the defeat of the South:

[T]he contempt that has been cast upon the organic law of the land, the scorn and insult heaped upon the civil tribunals, the shameless disregard of the clearest rights of individuals and of States; the foul means used and justified; the prostrate adoration of brute force; the assumption that the administration was the government, and that the "Union" was something distinct and above the States composing it. These monstrous doctrines and practices have left a poison which still haunts the body politic and scatters germs of evil everywhere.<sup>24</sup>

The intense emotion that litters these pages at no time encompasses modesty or humility. An anonymous review of Scharf's *History of the Confederate Navy* noted that his "opinion recurs again and again and its manner of presentation is more remarkable for the author's unquestioned authority than for cogency of reasoning."<sup>25</sup> After publishing four major works on Maryland history, Scharf wrote other histories—of St. Louis; Philadelphia; Westchester County, New York; Delaware; and Orkney Springs, Shenandoah County, Virginia. By 1891 he was at the peak of his success and prepared to resign his commission in the land office for a federal

customs job in New York. He decided to leave behind his Maryland historical collection, and he gave it to Hopkins.

Little in the surviving record clarifies how well Adams and Scharf knew each other, yet clues suggest that Adams played a significant role in Scharf's decision to donate his gift to Hopkins. On the eve of the donation, Gilman received a telegram from Scharf (who was in Washington D.C.): "Please say to Dr. Adams that today I purchased a fine collection of pamphlets. These will make my donation of pamphlets number about fifty thousand." The same day, Gilman wrote to Scharf acknowledging notice of the forthcoming gift, the "purpose of which Dr. Adams and Dr. Browne had already spoken." Gilman goes on to praise Scharf's vision of the university as a center for the study of Southern history. William Birney wrote to Adams in May 1891, stating he was "glad to learn that Col. Scharf has presented his historical collection to the Johns Hopkins University, and I am much gratified by your assurance that my donation may have led to his."<sup>26</sup>

Within a year of the initial gift, Scharf added to the collection. "I take great pleasure in adding to the J. Thomas Scharf Collection . . . a choice collection of very interesting historical matter." He went on to detail the Civil War items and closed by "Wishing you continued success in your good work and promising larger contributions in the future." Another letter written five days later asked if Adams could "arrange to go to Annapolis with me on Tuesday morning . . . to look over my stock of curios . . . I want to have them packed and turned over to you. Hoping to see you Monday morning at the University."<sup>27</sup>

Another interesting link was the discovery of three folders of Scharf's original notes and research materials for the *History of Baltimore City and County* among Adams's papers at Hopkins.<sup>28</sup> When sample entries were compared, the previously unidentified material matched the book text. (The original notes have the names of the ghost writers in the margins). Accession notes suggest that the material was given to Adams to edit, yet in light of the identity of the compiler, it is likely Scharf gave the material to Adams for the Southern History room in the library.

The most startling feature of Scharf's gift going to Hopkins is that Adams would have been well aware that, according to the legislation that he had written a decade earlier, thousands of the state papers in the Scharf collection should have gone to the Maryland Historical Society. Why did he encourage Scharf's decision? In the name of history "the grandest study in the world,"<sup>29</sup> Adams would have justified his position; and Scharf's determination to memorialize the South would have directed him to Hopkins. Of equal importance, in the decade following the success of the Paper Project the society's attention remained on the colonial records in its care, and the Scharf material extended through the Civil War. Scharf clearly stated that the material was to be kept together, and if it had gone to the historical society it most certainly would have been dismantled, since it did not fit the criteria of the Maryland State Paper Project of 1882.<sup>30</sup>

By April 1891, with Adams secure at Hopkins and Scharf determined to leave a gift that would advance the study of his beloved South, wagons bearing the first installment of the collection arrived at the university. The newspaper report

provides extensive detail of the contents and quotes President Gilman's letter to Scharf that he be "assured that you are doing a great service to the public by placing these valuable collections where students and men of letters may have access to them." Public comment from the history department came from Adams's friend and colleague, Professor Richard T. Ely, who stated that the unequalled facilities of the Scharf material would provide his students with the resources they needed to write a complete financial history of the South.<sup>31</sup> Adams, as in the Paper Project of a decade earlier, was absent from the official record.

After delivery to Hopkins, plans were made for cataloging and incorporating the material into the resources available to students. As a result of both donations, Birney's grandniece gave \$100 for a prize to be awarded for the best contribution to American history by a resident student of the university with papers to be submitted to Dr. Adams by 1 May 1892. During the next five years students were instructed in the use of the Scharf and Birney collections in Dr. James C. Ballagh's courses and his "Conference on Southern History."<sup>32</sup> Hopkins students did not have the opportunity to study the entire Scharf collection. Adams's untimely death in 1901 at the age of fifty-one marked the decline of the local research and Southern history programs. Ballagh continued his courses until 1913, when he departed Hopkins for a position at the University of Pennsylvania.



Herbert Baxter Adams left Maryland history far different than he found it, and Maryland historians are the prime beneficiaries of his gifts. In his enthusiasm to provide maximum research material for his students, he carried Brantz Mayer's preservation cause to victory, and in the preservation and proper care for those documents one finds vindication enough for Adams and the Maryland Historical Society. Legislation mandated Adams's doctrine of accessibility, assuring "that said records shall at all times be accessible to the inspection of any citizen of this State free of all charges and fees."<sup>33</sup> The *Archives of Maryland* series remains one of the most valuable research tools available in early American history.

Scharf's legacy continues to be tinted with a stigma that extends beyond whatever intellectual weaknesses are found in his work. Adams directed his efforts toward preservation within the state system until the spring of 1891. Scharf appreciated that philosophy, and it seems mercenary that he continued to absorb state papers into his private collection long after the legislation of 1882. By the time of the Hopkins presentation, Scharf's collection contained "50,000 pamphlets, the files of fifteen or more Confederate newspapers, 3000 broadsides, a large assortment of papers of private citizens, and a mass of official Maryland records."<sup>34</sup>

Adams's death and the subsequent end of his programs at Hopkins left the Scharf collection untouched for more than half a century until, in the 1960s, the university placed the papers on deposit with the Maryland Historical Society. In the 1980s, by joint agreement of the society and the Maryland State Archives, those items considered official state papers were transferred to Annapolis.<sup>35</sup> Known at the

archives as the "Fugitive State Papers," the collection still officially bears Scharf's name, and the vast size of this portion alone can be seen in the inventory list, which is more than a thousand pages in length. Dr. Edward C. Papenfuse, current state archivist, suggests preservation of these documents may not have been secured if Scharf had not seen their value and devoted thirty years to their collection.<sup>36</sup> Scharf's publications serve as informal published archives since they contain full transcripts of some of the documents he collected. The weaknesses in interpretation noted by modern researchers who consult these works was summed up by William Hand Browne more than a century ago. "We will venture to hint to Mr. Scharf that chronicles are written by heaping together facts, history by building them into a complete and harmonious whole."<sup>37</sup>

Adams and Scharf ultimately illustrated quite different approaches to Maryland history. Scharf's insatiable appetite for documents and his choice to reproduce them rather than interpret them classifies him as a chronicler who saw in his work the importance of publishing records, immortalizing heroes, and building a monument to Maryland. Adams and his students were more concerned with exploring those records, armed with specific questions about the history of Maryland. What these two historians shared was a common goal to preserve the records of the Old Line State, and they devoted their careers to insuring that those documents would survive into the future. Through the collections of John Thomas Scharf and the efforts of Brantz Mayer, Herbert Baxter Adams, and the Maryland Historical Society, the records of Maryland are available for study by anyone with an interest in Maryland history.

#### NOTES

1. Wendell H. Stephenson, "Herbert B. Adams and Southern Historical Scholarship at the Johns Hopkins University," *MdHM*, 42 (1947): 3. The author thanks Dr. John G. Van Osdell, chairman of the history department, Towson State University, for his advice and encouragement during the preparation of this essay.

2. Hugh Hawkins, *Pioneer: A History of the Johns Hopkins University, 1874-1889* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), pp. 7-10.

3. Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, *The Modern Researcher*, 4th ed. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), p. 257; Mark T. Gilderhus, *History and Historians*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1987), pp. 109-10.

4. J. M. Vincent, "Herbert B. Adams, A Biographical Sketch," *Herbert B. Adams Tributes of Friends with a Bibliography of the Department of History, Economics and Politics 1876-1901*, Series XX, extra no. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1902), p. 14; Bernard C. Steiner, "Dedication of the H. Irvine Keyser Memorial Building," *MdHM*, 14 (1919): 19-20. In this primitive era of graduate study the term seminary was used to define a special school for the training of advanced students—a seminar.

5. Richard S. Cox, "A Century of Frustration: The Movement for a State Archives in Maryland, 1811-1935," *MdHM*, 78 (1983): 112; Maryland State Papers #SH049, Series Guide Sheet, p. 1, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.

6. Cox, "A Century of Frustration," p. 110.
7. Herbert Baxter Adams, *Maryland's Influence in Founding a National Commonwealth, or the History of the Accession of Public Lands by the Old Confederation* (Maryland Historical Society Fund Publication #11, 1877).
8. *Laws of the State of Maryland . . . 1882*, chap. 138.
9. Series 8, box 61, Herbert Baxter Adams Papers, Ms. 4, Special Collections, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University (hereinafter Adams Papers).
10. Raymond J. Cunningham, "Is History Past Politics? Herbert Baxter Adams as Precursor of the New History," *The History Teacher*, 2 (1976): 247.
11. Appointment book of Herbert B. Adams, 28 November 1881, Adams Papers Ms. 4; Bryce to Adams, 29 November 1881, series 1, box 2, *ibid.*; Herbert B. Adams, ed., *Mr. Freeman's Visit to Baltimore*, Johns Hopkins Studies in Historical and Political Science (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1883), pp. 7–10. Viscount James Bryce was a leading politician, statesman, and professor of civil law at Oxford. He was also a popular diplomat and author of *The American Commonwealth*, a comprehensive study of the political institutions of the United States.
12. Minutes of the Maryland Historical Society, Ms. 2008, pp. 117–19, Maryland Historical Society (MdHS). George William Brown was elected mayor of Baltimore just prior to the Civil War. By 1887 he was chief judge of the Supreme Bench of Baltimore. He was the author of *Baltimore and the Nineteenth of April 1861* (repr., Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1882). The original manuscript of this work is with the Adams Papers, series 5, box 43.
13. Appointment Book, 13 December 1881, Adams Papers Ms. 4.
14. *The Nation*, 41 (1881): 860; Appointment Book, 21 December 1881, Adams Papers Ms. 4; *Baltimore American*, 24 December 1881; *Baltimore Sun*, 26 December 1881.
15. Appointment Book, 9 January 1882, Adams Papers Ms. 4; Brown to Adams, 17 February 1882, series 1, box 2, *ibid.*; Adams, "Memorial of the Maryland Historical Society to the Honorable General Assembly of Maryland," rough draft, series 8, box 68, *ibid.* John Higham wrote that Adams was "talking with certain Baltimore gentlemen as early as 1878 about ways and means of persuading the State to publish some of its early colonial records." See Higham, "Herbert Baxter Adams and the Study of Local History," *American Historical Review*, 89 (1984): 1231. Brantz Mayer was probably one of these gentlemen as the petition of 1878 included the publication clause.
16. *Nation*, 42 (1882): 213.
17. Minute Book, Ms. 2008, p. 138, MdHS. Membership in the society was by board approval until the 1960s.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 146, 202.
19. Stephenson, "Herbert B. Adams," pp. 8, 11–14; *Tributes of Friends*, pp. 71–81.
20. Minute Book, 1884 election ballots, Ms. 2008, MdHS; MHS minutes of the library committee, 26 April 1887, *ibid.*; minute books, p. 149, *ibid.*
21. Birney to Adams, March 1891, series 1, box 2, Adams Papers Ms. 4.

22. Cox, "A Century of Frustration," pp. 111–12; Morris L. Radoff, "An Elusive Manuscript: The Proceedings of the Maryland Convention of 1774," *American Archivist*, 30 (1967): 59–65.
23. J. Thomas Scharf, *The Chronicles of Baltimore: Being a History of Baltimore Town and Baltimore City from the Earliest Period to the Present Day* (Baltimore: Turnbull Bros., 1874), preface.
24. J. Thomas Scharf, *The History of Maryland from the Earliest Period to the Present Day*, (repr., 3 vols.; Hatboro, Pa.: Tradition Press, 1967), 3: 662.
25. Diehlman-Hayward Files, MdHS.
26. Scharf to Daniel Coit Gilman, 10 April 1891, Daniel Coit Gilman Papers, Ms. 1, series 1, box 40, Special Collections, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University; Gilman to Scharf, 10 April 1891, *ibid.*; Birney to Adams, 8 May 1891, series 1, box 2, Adams Papers, Ms. 4.
27. Scharf to Adams, 15 and 20 February 1892, series 1, box 14, Adams Papers, Ms. 4.
28. *Ibid.*, series 5, box 43.
29. *Tributes of Friends*, p. 11.
30. Cox, "A Century of Frustration," p. 111; Johns Hopkins University Circular #89, April 1891, p. 110.
31. *Baltimore Sun*, 23 April 1891.
32. Johns Hopkins University Circular #89, p. 113; Stephenson, "Herbert B. Adams," pp. 12–19.
33. *Laws of the State of Maryland . . . 1882*, chap. 138.
34. Stephenson, "Herbert B. Adams," p. 10.
35. P. William Filby, former director of the Maryland Historical Society, telephone interview, 9 December 1992.
36. Dr. Edward C. Papenfuse, state archivist, telephone interviews 5 May 1992 and 14 January 1993. A full index to the J. Thomas Scharf Collection, #S1005, is available on computer in the main search room of the Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.
37. *Nation*, 30 (1880): 217–18.

## Research Notes & Maryland Miscellany

### Tobacco, Planters, Tenants, and Slaves: A Portrait of Montgomery County in 1783

TODD H. BARNETT

Most eighteenth-century travellers through Montgomery County, Maryland—moving westward—found nothing particularly noteworthy in the settlements they passed. The land appeared much like that in other tobacco-producing counties of the Chesapeake. To outsiders coming from the other direction, however, Montgomery was striking. Journeying eastward from Frederick County in the 1790s, Isaac Weld wrote:

The change in the face of the country after leaving Frederick is gradual, but at the end of a day's journey a striking difference is perceptible. Instead of well-cultivated fields, green with wheat, such as are met with along that rich track which runs contiguous to the mountains, large pieces of land, which have been worn out with the culture of tobacco are here seen lying waste, with scarcely an herb to cover them. Instead of the furrows of the plough, the marks of the hoe appear on the ground; the fields are overspread with little hillocks for the reception of tobacco plants, and the eye is assailed in every direction with the unpleasant sight of gangs of male and female slaves toiling under the harsh commands of the overseer.<sup>1</sup>

Montgomery County may have resembled other Chesapeake tobacco areas, but, as Weld's journey suggests, it offers an interesting case study in the narrative of early Maryland. Montgomery was Maryland's last tobacco frontier in the colony. Planters did not venture far beyond the convenient rivers of the tidewater, and settlers farther west planted grains. Lying just on the south side of a division between Maryland's slave-dominated southern counties and the largely free northern and western counties, Montgomery supplied a border area—a place on the margin of tobacco economy and society. In 1790 Montgomery's population was 33.5 percent slave. That of Frederick County was only 11.8 percent.<sup>2</sup>

Isaac Weld's journey through prosperous Frederick County farms into decaying

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tobacco fields suggests a number of questions about the character of the marginal Montgomery land, economy, and society at the end of the eighteenth century. What did the mature tobacco country look like? Was it dominated by worn-out fields or forests, by well-kept plantations or ramshackle sheds? Were its settlers generally poor or rich, and how evenly was wealth distributed? How many families owned land and how often did they move? What, if anything, do we know about the lives of the “gangs” of slaves? In sum, what qualities characterized the evolving boundary between slavery and freedom—between the emerging division of staple agriculture based on bound labor and diversified family farms?

A remarkable and under-utilized source provides a window to Montgomery County at the height of tobacco production in the post-Revolutionary War period. In 1783 the Maryland General Assembly levied an assessment on the state’s counties, and, as is the case with fifteen other jurisdictions, the schedules for Montgomery have survived. They provide a wealth of information about its history.<sup>3</sup> Covering soil and land quality, housing, farm improvements, chattel, demographics, and wealth, the assessment provides insight into the emerging weaknesses of the tobacco economy in the late eighteenth century and thus the transition in agriculture and the place of slavery in the early nineteenth-century Chesapeake.



Montgomery County lands were a part of Prince George’s County when in the late seventeenth century speculators began to patent land there, but settlement did not take place until the 1710s. The county’s first residents were planters moving west in order to exploit new tobacco lands. By 1733 the white newcomers made up approximately 120 households.<sup>4</sup> At first they settled on lands adjacent to navigable rivers and streams. In time they spread throughout the county. Planting was particularly attractive because in the mid-eighteenth century Glasgow and Whitehaven tobacco merchants began to establish retail stores on the upper Potomac River. Their trade with the French monopoly assured local growers of a consistent market for their crop.<sup>5</sup> In 1748 these lands became a part of Frederick County. At the time of declared independence from Britain, Montgomery County was carved from Frederick’s eastern portions.

The 1783 Montgomery County assessment offers a subtle portrait of the contemporary landscape because it called for a fairly detailed account of the land and soil quality. In each of six districts, assessors generally described each tract of land and its extent of cleared acreage; they reported the soils of individual tracts of land using terms like “good,” “middling” or “tolerable,” or “thin,” “poor,” or “worn.” They also gave details on other negative or positive characteristics of the land such as whether it was “hilly,” “broken,” “stony,” “timbered,” or “sapling.”<sup>6</sup> When analyzed along with the assessment’s details on dwellings and other improvements, these descriptions provide a sharp image of early Montgomery’s landscape.

Except for lands in the southeastern corner—in the Lower Potomac and Middle Potomac Hundreds—the assessors’ descriptions of the natural cover in one category

and the soil in another did not paint an attractive picture. They commonly used the term “sapling,” referring to areas with little or no forest. Descriptions of timbered lands often carried qualifiers like “good” or “strong,” but sapling lands were never defined this way. Rather than mature hardwoods, these grounds were covered by brush and small trash trees. Sapling land dominated the landscape in the second, third, and fourth districts.<sup>7</sup> In Upper Potomac, Sugar Land, Northwest, Rock Creek, Seneca, and Newfoundland Hundreds, the assessors described unimproved lands as “sapling” almost exclusively. If assessors did not mark the lands this way, they described the soil quality as “thin” or termed the land “hilly” or “timbered.” In Sugar Land and part of Upper Potomac Hundreds, the assessor described 37,206 of 56,626 acres as sapling-covered land. In the northwestern corner of the county, in Sugar Loaf and Linganore Hundreds, more forest remained and “sapling” land coexisted with “timbered” land. Settlers commonly lived in open ranges rather than thick forests.

Some small portion of the sapling land must have evolved from abandoned agricultural fields, but the majority of these fields had lost their timber to the efforts of the Susquehannocks and other Indian tribes earlier in the century. Burning land, often in summer, was a common practice among mid-Atlantic natives for several reasons. The fires served as traps or foils in the Indians’ hunt. More important in the long run, the fires left conditions that were amenable to the animals the natives liked to hunt. The flora that returned on burned lands—grasses, berries, and other sweets—made excellent forage for deer, rabbits, squirrels, bear, beaver, and turkey. Though European settlers perceived the fires as dangerous and destructive, the Indians were simply practicing their own peculiar agriculture in setting flame to early Maryland.<sup>8</sup>

Seeing these vast tracts of scrubby growth (they occupied much of northern Maryland in the century), settlers were discouraged from establishing farms. Not only were the lands void of much-needed timber, but to pioneers, such growth indicated inferior soil just as tall stands of hardwoods supposedly only grew in rich ground. The reputation of Maryland’s backcountry for scrub growth and poor soil delayed settlement there for several decades in the eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup> As late as 1791 Thomas Johnson, an agricultural correspondent of George Washington, wrote that the county land would sell according to “quality, improvements, and the proportion left in wood.”<sup>10</sup>

The silt-loam soils of Montgomery County were actually quite fertile compared to the primarily loamy and sandy earth of Prince George’s, whence many settlers had come.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, of the 1,203 tracts on which the assessors noted soil quality, only about one in nine was described as “good” or otherwise as fertile. Another quarter of the tracts were of middling quality. Most land in the county appeared in the books in disparaging terms. The six assessors were not consistent in their terminology, but five of the six described much of their district as “thin,” “poor,” or “worn.”<sup>12</sup> In each of the five districts inferior soils made up a majority of the area. This perspective generally coincides with Thomas Johnson’s view that Montgomery County “land in general, is what may be called with us of middling or

## MARYLAND COUNTIES IN 1790



rather inferior quality . . . a good deal of it is much impoverished, or, as we call it, worn out.”<sup>13</sup>

Much of this description probably followed from the prevailing doubts about sapling land, but an equally important explanation was the accumulated effects of tobacco and corn agriculture. Tobacco was extremely exhausting to the soil. Typical practice in the early tidewater was to plant a tract in tobacco for three seasons, after which the planter would simply let the ground lie fallow for twenty years. Johnson described the local rotation a little differently: “it has been generally tended the first two years in tobacco, the third in Indian corn, and sown down in wheat.”<sup>14</sup> Continuous tobacco cropping had given much of the land the “worn” or “poor” appearance the assessors so often noted.

The county suffered because of its suitability for growing Oronoco tobacco. This strain had long been grown on the siltier soils of tidewater Virginia plantations and in much of Maryland.<sup>15</sup> Unlike the sweet-scented or brighter strains of Oronoco, which grew well in a relatively dry, yet fertile sand commonly found near rivers, some Oronoco seeds grew best in heavy, dense soils that retained water.<sup>16</sup> When cured, the sweet-scented and bright seeds produced a smooth, low-nicotine tobacco that became the standard of quality in England. Cured to a heavier, darker, rather bitter taste, the cheaper Oronoco sold well in other parts of Europe.<sup>17</sup> Good sweet-scented soils could be found in parts of many tidewater counties, and particularly along the York, Rappahannock, and Potomac rivers below the fall line. But in the mid-eighteenth century, the best Oronoco soils may have been the fertile silt loams of Montgomery County. The port of Georgetown, and Montgomery tobacco particularly, had good reputations in the late eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup> The rebounding prices of the postwar era only encouraged heavier tobacco production on existing plantations and new operations on virgin land.<sup>19</sup>

TABLE 1  
Montgomery County Soil Quality  
According to the Assessment of 1783

Soil Descriptions	Tax Districts					Total
	Number of Tracts					
	1	2	3	4	5	
"Good"	36	26	8	16	15	131
"Fresh"					10	10
"Good" Subtotal	36	26	38	16	25	141
"Middling"	48	95	*	111	25	279
"Indifferent"				19	19	
"Tolerable"	8					
"Middling" Subtotal	56	95	0	111	44	306
"Thin"	66	210	*	195	160	631
"Poor"	19		2		42	63
"Worn"	3	1		6	48	58
"Weak"	1					1
"Bad"	1					1
"Mean"			2			2
"Bad" Subtotal	90	211	4	201	250	756

\*245 tracts in District 3 are described as sapling land, implying thin or middling soil. Tax districts included the following hundreds: (1) Georgetown, Middle Potomac and Lower Potomac; (2) Upper Potomac and Sugar Land; (3) Northwest, Rock Creek, and part of Newfoundland; (4) Seneca and part of Newfoundland; (5) Linganore and Sugar Loaf. Source: State Tax Assessment of 1783, Montgomery County, S 1161, Maryland State Archives.

The 1783 assessment does not provide much agricultural information, but Montgomery County was clearly dominated by tobacco in that year. The worn lands are one indication, but travellers also described its agriculture. Isaac Weld found that in Montgomery "the plantations are extensive; large quantities of tobacco are raised."<sup>20</sup> Johnson claimed that the labor of the people had been "wholly applied in the cultivation of tobacco." Wheat eventually became the primary staple in much of northern Virginia and Maryland, but in 1783 it remained a secondary plantation crop in Montgomery. Johnson was one of those who could see how tobacco was exhausting Montgomery County and much of rest of the country at that time. To say, he wrote,

TABLE 2  
Improvements and Livestock Reported in  
Montgomery County Assessment of 1783

	Tax Districts					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Log Houses	37	NR	64	239	237	577
Frame Houses	0	NR	106	74	49	229
Brick and Stone Houses	3	NR	7	4	0	14
Houses of Unspecified Material Type	117	NR	18	18	42	195
Tobacco Barns	134	NR	148	193	132	607
Barns	18	NR	36	36	41	131
Kitchens	63	NR	10	7	113	193
Horses	1,078	1,498	1,123	991	1,131	5,821
Cattle	1,915	3,207	2,333	2,104	2,184	11,743

NR—Not reported. Source: State Tax Assessment of 1783, Montgomery County, S 1161, Maryland State Archives.

that great quantities of tobacco are raised in any tract of country, implies without more, that the land is *wasted*, and no surplus of any thing made in it but tobacco. Some few plantations are not to be included within my general description; they are very good, are better managed, and would sell considerably higher.<sup>21</sup>

Johnson saw that Montgomery soils had the potential for good farm land but also saw that the landscape of the county had become quite barren as a result of tobacco.

This devotion to tobacco turned up in the accounting of houses and improvements in the 1783 assessment. The most common types of improvements were dwellings. On a few plantations, wealthier householders built substantial brick or stone houses. These were atypical, sturdy structures that had relatively long lives. The dwellings in which almost all of Montgomery's residents lived were, instead, "old" log or frame homes of bad or middling quality, typically twenty-four (or twenty) feet by sixteen feet.<sup>22</sup> Although the assessors made few comments about these smaller homes—they were only concerned with noting features that added value to

the land—the dwellings likely had earthen floors and chimneys made of clay and wood, rarely of brick.<sup>23</sup> Speaking of these structures generally, Thomas Jefferson noted that while “the poorest people build huts of logs, laid horizontally in pens, stopping the interstices with mud,” most early Chesapeake houses were made of “scantling and boards, plastered with lime.” He further claimed, “[i]t is impossible to devise things more ugly, uncomfortable and happily more perishable.”<sup>24</sup> In Montgomery, then, the most common sight among its tobacco fields may have been the poor, “ugly,” ramshackle houses of tenant families.

The second most common structure in the county was the tobacco barn, typically used for only a month or so after the crop had been harvested. Workers hung the tobacco leaves on sticks and then suspended them within the shelter of the barn for curing. Barns, too, were either of frame or log construction; they averaged about the same size as houses. There were reportedly 607 of these structures in the county, and they were distributed evenly through the hundreds. As elsewhere in the tidewater, only a few farmers built barns for sheltering livestock. Just 131 of the county tracts featured such a structure. Most cattle, swine, and sheep foraged freely in nearby forests or sapling land (indicating one advantage the Europeans derived from the open Montgomery landscape). In Frederick County, by contrast, German wheat farmers built large substantial barns that often dwarfed their dwelling houses.<sup>25</sup>

Assessors noted a number of other improvements in their 1783 accounts. The wealthier householders often built detached kitchens that removed one threat of fire from the main house and helped to keep houses cool in the summer. These structures were found on 193 farms in the county. Other structures included corn cribs, meat houses, slave quarters, and a small number of buildings associated with crafts—smith’s shops, tanyards and saw mills. There were seventeen grist mills in the county, each of which usually added much value to the land in the assessments.

In sum, the settlers of Montgomery had put little effort into developing or improving their land. They had slowly exhausted its soils, and their inattention to their homes and barns reflected their attitude toward their environment. Other than a few large, conspicuous plantation houses and several regional mills, householders had invested little time or money in farm structures. The attitude that dominated much of the Chesapeake also characterized the settlers of Montgomery: they felt little desire to improve a land they only intended to exhaust and abandon.

Instead of homes or barns, Montgomery settlers invested much of their money elsewhere, in an institution that also was an important element of the contemporary landscape—slavery. Travelling through the county, especially if going east from relatively slave-less Frederick County, a contemporary would have been struck, as was Isaac Weld, by the increasing number of blacks working the county’s fields of tobacco. Starting in Frederick, the black population was smallest in the northern part of the county, along the Pennsylvania border. Blacks made up between 10 and 20 percent of the population in the central, Monocacy Valley area, and between 20 and 30 percent in the southeastern corner along the Montgomery border.<sup>26</sup> Moving west through Montgomery County, the proportions climbed continuously. The

TABLE 3  
Montgomery County Population, 1783

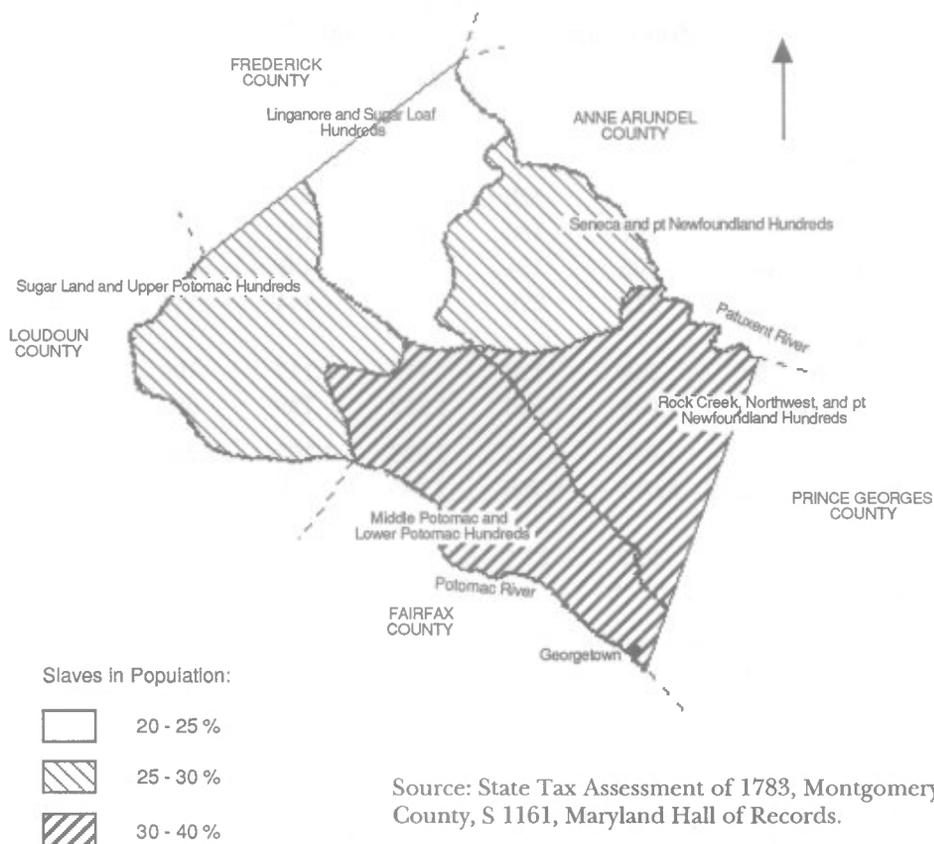
	Tax District					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Slaves:						
Children 0-7	338	322	371	218	226	1,475
Children 8-13	197	166	218	125	121	827
Women 14-35	205	184	213	135	114	851
Men 14-44	215	226	217	144	116	918
Women 36+ and Men 45+	143	128	113	117	105	606
Total Slaves	1,098	1,026	1,132	739	682	4,677
Whites	1,976	2,762	2,053	1,767	2,245	10,803
Total Population	3,074	3,788	3,185	2,506	2,927	15,480
Percentage of Slaves in Population	35.7	27.1	35.5	29.5	23.3	30.2

Source: State Tax Assessment of 1783, Montgomery County, S 1161, Maryland State Archives.

percentages were lowest in the northernmost reaches of the county in Linganore and Sugar Loaf Hundreds. There slaves made up 23 percent of the population. Farther south, slaves made up 28 percent of the district in Upper Potomac and Sugar Land Hundreds along the Potomac, and 29 percent in Seneca and part of Newfoundland Hundreds on the Patuxent above the fall line. In the southeastern corner in Middle Potomac and Upper Potomac Hundreds and Georgetown, slaves made up 36 percent of the population, laboring primarily on the ideally situated tobacco plantations of the Potomac. Slaves also constituted 36 percent of the population in the eastern corner of the county along the Patuxent River in Rock Creek, Northwest, and part of Newfoundland Hundreds. Moving beyond the county border to Prince George's County and the Chesapeake to the east, the number of slaves in the population remained high.<sup>27</sup>

This geographical spectrum of increasing slave populations indicated the importance of tobacco and wheat production among farmers and planters on western Maryland's landscape. Within Montgomery, however, it is important to note that each hundred and each community contained a sizeable black population, and the county itself remained thoroughly committed to tobacco and slavery. There were certain political and social currents that may have been just beginning to discourage slaveholding in parts of Maryland in 1783: the ideological fervor of the Revolution may have persuaded a few whites in Montgomery that slavery was wrong, or the

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY SLAVE POPULATION, 1783



beginnings of organized Methodism in the county and its opposition to slavery may have encouraged some to consider abolition.<sup>28</sup> For the most part, however, slavery continued to be socially and politically accepted and crucial to Montgomery's tobacco economy.

Although the 1783 assessment contains few details about the lives of the slaves themselves, one can derive several conclusions about the character of the black population and their experiences from the 1783 data and a 1776 census for several of the hundreds.<sup>29</sup> One important quality that can be determined is the rate of natural increase among slaves. That rate was high, as evidenced by the large percentage of native-born slaves in the population. This condition characterized most of Virginia and Maryland in 1783 because African imports declined precipitously after about 1740.<sup>30</sup> In Montgomery the slaves' names, provided for several hundreds in the 1776 census, also reveal a thoroughly American-born population. Though several of the slaves maintained African names ("Suba," "Zanga," and "Tuba" in Northwest Hundred, for example), almost all had received some form of traditional English names or, in rare cases, classical names. In

TABLE 4  
Plantation Size in Montgomery and Other Areas  
of Virginia and Maryland, 1782-1790

Place and Time	Percentage of Slaves Size of Unit in Acres				Total
	1-5	6-10	11-20	21+	
Montgomery County 1783 (n = 4,677)	29	31	25	15	100
Tidewater Virginia and Maryland 1782-1790 (n = 46,547)	13	17	26	44	100
Piedmont Virginia 1782-1785 (n = 34,226)	13	18	28	41	100
Frontier Virginia 1782-1785 (n = 10,307)	21	23	28	29	101

Source: State Assessment of 1783, Montgomery County, S 1161, Maryland State Archives, and Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press for The Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1986), p. 338.

Northwest Hundred, the most common female slave names were Bett, Hannah, Nan, Rachel, and Sall, while the most frequent male names were Charles, Sam, Tom, Will, and George.<sup>31</sup> Of course, these slaves may well have called one another by different names, but all the evidence suggests that the slave population was a largely native one.

The ratio of children to adults in the population provided an indication of the high rate of natural increase among the slave population. Combining the totals of slaves in Northwest, Sugar Loaf, and part of Sugar Land hundreds in 1776, the ratio of children aged 0-16 to adults 17-50 was 1 to 1.9, indicating a healthy rate of increase among the black population there.<sup>32</sup> The rate was likely even higher in the other hundreds of the county where the slave populations were larger. The 1783 assessment schedules do not provide information to calculate this particular ratio, but they do reveal that there was an even larger percentage of children 0-14 among the black population at this later date. The black people of Montgomery were native, healthy, and reproducing in 1783.

The growing black population suggests that slaves in Montgomery County in 1783 had the opportunity to form a meaningful social life despite their bondage. Less African in character, the slaves themselves were probably not troubled by hostilities between rival Africans or between natives and creoles.<sup>33</sup> The equal sex ratios meant

TABLE 5  
Wealth in Maryland Counties, 1783

	Percentages				
	Montgomery	Harford	Charles	Talbot	Caroline
N	2,072	1,975	1,892	1,360	1,380
Households owning less than 50 pounds	47.7	41.0	33.4	41.0	41.8
Households owning less than 100 pounds	60.1	55.0	46.8	55.5	59.1

Sources: State Assessment of 1783, Montgomery County, S 1161, Maryland State Archives, and Gregory A. Stiverson, *Poverty in a Land of Plenty: Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Maryland* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), pp. 143-9.

that slave men had better chances of finding wives than their earlier counterparts, and the varied age groupings in the assessment suggest that most plantations were marked by slave families. The density of slaves in the county, though lower than in other parts of Virginia and Maryland, allowed the formation of networks of slaves and communities beyond single plantations. The centers of these communities were likely the few large plantations or the fifty-four "quarters" noted in the assessment. According to Isaac Weld, "the quarters of the slaves [were] situated in the neighbourhood of the principal dwelling house, which [gave] the residence of every planter the appearance of a village."<sup>34</sup> These were places where the slaves married and where family activities took place in the evenings and on Sundays and holidays.

The relatively low rate of slaveowner mobility also helped sustain the families and communities among Montgomery slaves. Many of the older slaves had certainly been transported to Montgomery, since it was a relatively young county, but the rate of black transports out of the county in 1783 was low. Judging by the slave names and ages listed in the 1776 census for Northwest Hundred and the ages listed on the 1783 assessment, roughly 78 percent (194 of 249) of the 1776 group remained on the same plantations in 1783. Considering that some of the removals were deaths, the transfer rate for the slaves of Montgomery must have been quite low. Slaves tended to remain in the county because, of all the white people leaving and moving around in early Maryland, the wealthy, slaveholding settlers were the least likely to abandon the county. Many of the young slaves of the county would eventually be sold away to satisfy the labor demand of cotton farmers in the Southwest. To describe the slaves' lack of transiency as an asset may be misleading, but it was an important part of the construction and endurance of slave families and communities. It is also ironic that the slaves of Montgomery may have been more deeply rooted in the county in 1783 than the white population.

Only one characteristic of Montgomery demographics militated against the

TABLE 6  
Size of Landholdings Among Montgomery County Householders, 1783

Acres	Tax District					Total	% of Total
	1*	2	3	4	5		
0	199	364	222	181	237	1,202	61.4
1-49	10	13	8	10	6	47	2.4
50-99	21	19	21	22	33	116	5.9
100-199	43	63	40	36	83	265	13.5
200-299	20	30	37	12	36	135	6.9
300-399	22	5	17	11	14	69	3.5
400-499	3	10	5	12	5	35	1.8
500-599	5	5	2	13	6	31	1.6
600-699	4	4	3	3	6	20	1.0
700-799	1	3	2	2	1	9	0.5
800-899	1	3	1	2		7	0.4
900-999	2		3		1	6	0.3
1,000-1,499	2	4	2		2	10	0.5
1,500-1,999			1	3	1	5	0.3
2,000-2,999							0.0
3,000+			1	1		2	0.1
Total	333	523	365	308	431	1,961	100.0

\*District 1 excludes Georgetown acreage.

Source: State Assessment of 1783, Montgomery County, S 1161, Maryland State Archives.

TABLE 7  
Montgomery County Land Held by Non-Householders, 1783

	Tax District					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Acres owned by non-householders	9,391	40,251	20,251	14,618	42,036	126,546
Percent of total patented land of district	20.2	51.0	33.7	21.9	53.2	38.2

Source: State Assessment of 1783, Montgomery County, S 1161, Maryland Hall of Records.

TABLE 8  
Slaves Held by Landless Householders of Montgomery County, 1783

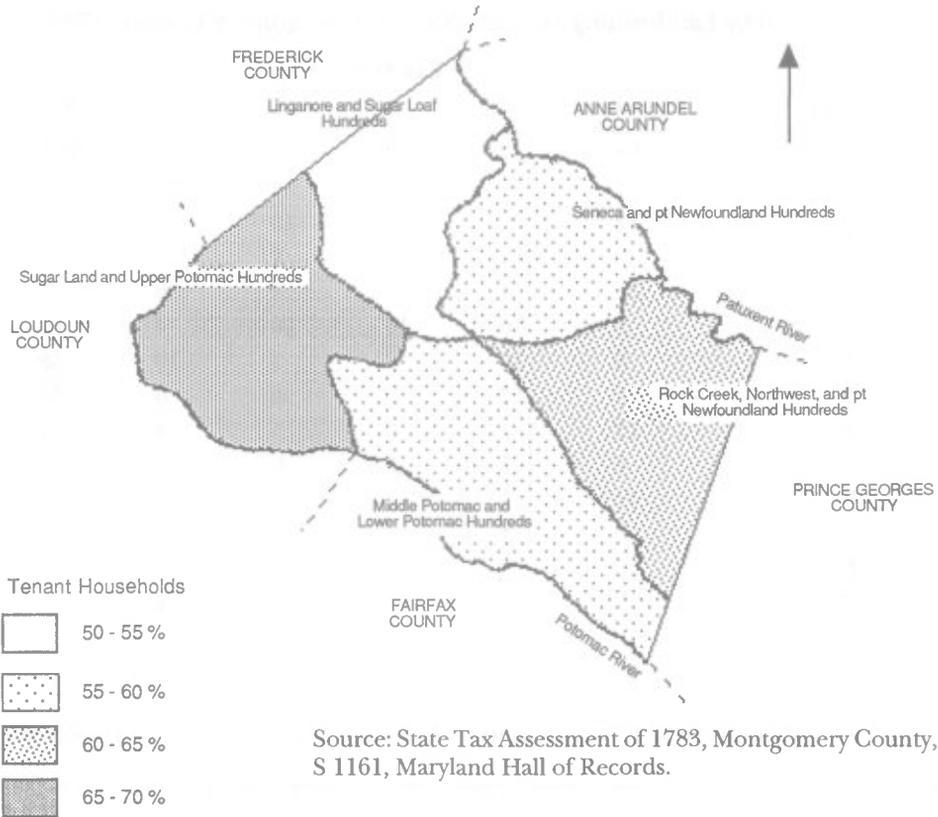
Number	Tax District					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
0	159	288	169	148	205	969
1	13	34	29	15	17	108
2	9	13	11	5	5	43
3	6	13	3	4	5	31
4	4	9	5	3	2	23
5	1	3		4	2	10
6	3	2	2	1		8
7	1	3				4
8	1	1	1			3
9			1			1
10-14			1	1	1	3
15-19	1					1
20-24						
25-29						
30+						
Total						1,204

Source: State Assessment of 1783, Montgomery County, S 1161, Maryland Hall of Records.

growth of slave communities: its relatively small plantation sizes. Compared to tidewater Maryland and Virginia, or piedmont and frontier Virginia, the slave-holding sizes on Montgomery plantations was low. In these other areas, from 29 to 44 percent of the slave population lived on plantations with at least twenty other bondsmen, but only 15 percent lived in such large African-American communities in Montgomery. And while fewer slaves to the south and west lived on small farms, 29 percent of Montgomery's slaves lived in groups of five or fewer blacks. These circumstances, of course, worked against the county slaves' creating their own families.

Among Montgomery County whites in 1783, a few were wealthy and stayed put; most families were poor and given to mobility in search of betterment. The total value of 48 percent of county households was less than fifty pounds and the total value of 60 percent was less than 100 pounds. Small wealthy and large poor populations were not, however, an unusual feature of early Maryland life (30 to 50 percent of the households in Maryland counties in 1783 owned less than fifty pounds of wealth).<sup>35</sup> One quality that clearly set Montgomery apart from other Maryland counties was the low rate of landowning among the county population. A remarkable 63 percent of the household heads in the county owned no land; they were

MONTGOMERY COUNTY TENANT HOUSEHOLDS, 1783



tenants on others' property.<sup>36</sup> Among six of the other counties for which the 1783 assessment survives, only Talbot, with a 55.6 percent tenant population, and Charles, with 53.5 percent tenancy, approach the level of landlessness in Montgomery.<sup>37</sup> Calvert, Caroline, and Harford counties had tenant populations of 49 percent each. Across the Potomac in Virginia, similar landownership patterns existed in Fairfax County, where 64 percent of the householders owned land in 1782. Elsewhere in Virginia in 1782, the number of landless was lower, with a 58 percent tenant population in the Northern Neck, 44 percent in Richmond County, 36 percent in the Tidewater, and 30 percent in James City County.<sup>38</sup>

Tenancy was high in Montgomery and some of the surrounding counties because so much of the land was held by speculators who had accumulated huge tracts during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Instead of selling the land, these landlords opted to rent to tenants. The total amount of land held by non-householders in Montgomery in 1783 was 126,546 acres, or 38.2 percent of the total patented land of the county.<sup>39</sup> The largest holding of these non-resident landowners was that of Robert Peter, a Scottish merchant who operated a store in Georgetown and owned 10,960 acres.<sup>40</sup> Others included George Plater (4,796 acres), Samuel

TABLE 9  
Slaves Held by Landowning Householders of Montgomery County, 1783

Number	Tax District					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
0	58	47	32	40	93	270
1	13	16	9	14	25	77
2	12	9	9	13	15	58
3	9	14	11	7	10	51
4	11	14	17	7	6	55
5	8	10	15	10	4	47
6	8	10	7	3	10	38
7	8	12	5	6	6	37
8	12	8	5	4	4	33
9	6	5	5	6	5	27
10-14	14	5	17	11	4	51
15-19	6	4	11	3	4	28
20-24	6	4	4	1	2	17
25-29	2	1		1	1	5
30+	2		1	2		5
Total						799

Source: State Assessment of 1783, Montgomery County, S 1161, Maryland Hall of Records.

Hepburn (2,216), Henry Ridgely (2,172), Benjamin Dulaney (2,059), Gerard Hopkins (2,000), Ignatius Fenwick (1,877), Charles Carroll (1,792), and William Deakins (1,716).

Land prices had risen in the mid-eighteenth century, particularly after establishment of the tobacco warehouse at Georgetown, and opportunities for people of small means to acquire land had declined considerably. Those young men who did not inherit land had grim expectations of landownership in 1783. They labored in their tobacco fields and paid their landlords' high rents, but they rarely were fortunate enough to move into the ranks of the landowning.<sup>41</sup>

When Montgomery's tenants could accumulate some capital, they often chose not to invest in land, but in slaves. While 270 of the householders in the county held land without owning slaves, some 235 owned slaves but remained landless. Although some of these householders may have inherited the land or bondsmen, their ownership patterns imply the equal importance of land and slaves in Montgomery's economy. A healthy adult male slave was worth about seventy pounds in 1783, a female adult was valued at sixty pounds, and children and elderly slaves were worth lower amounts. Land, meanwhile, sold for a little less than a pound an acre, depending on quality, proximity to river transportation and improvements. Since

the tenants could purchase slaves as easily as buying land, many decided to buy labor. For tobacco planters, buying a slave often made sound economic sense—considering how rapidly tobacco exhausted land. Instead of land, they bought laborers whom they could move when their rented acreage became infertile. Here was an important way in which the Montgomery economy was vastly different from that of Frederick.

The transiency rate among Montgomery County whites was also extraordinary. By comparing the 1776 census for Northwest Hundred with the 1783 assessment, one can get some idea of the rate of transiency out of the county in this era.<sup>42</sup> Of the ninety-eight household heads in the 1776 census for Northwest Hundred, only forty-nine remained seven years later. Although some surely died and some were displaced by their service in the Revolutionary War, a 50 percent turnover in seven years represented a remarkable transformation. Those who left were generally younger and poorer, and they had smaller families. Also, most of the migrants out of the county had surely been part of its large group of tenants. Although we cannot know their destination, some of them likely moved to adjacent counties, some to the Virginia Piedmont, a few to the backcountry of Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, and a handful may have even have ventured to the Kentucky frontier.<sup>43</sup> They moved because they perceived the declining opportunities in Montgomery and felt more comfortable in casting their lot in less developed areas to the south and west.

To use the words of the assessors, the quality of Montgomery County in 1783 was “poor” or at best “middling.” The county had been developed as a new Oronoco tobacco frontier in the early eighteenth century as planters moved from the Chesapeake up the Potomac with their slaves in tow. By 1783, however, Montgomery had become a relatively barren landscape. The planters had exhausted most of the best county land with their continual crops of tobacco. The people of the county were primarily poor and landless, and most of its young people were forced to move on in order to have any opportunity of succeeding economically. Also, communities in the county must have been tenuous, considering the dispersed pattern of settlement and the almost continual mobility out of the county. Like other old plantation counties, Montgomery’s population declined during the 1790s as its people struggled to rebuild their economy in the midst of plummeting tobacco prices. In 1790 Montgomery had a population of 18,003, but this number declined over the decade to 15,058, and the population remained stagnant through the Civil War.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, the eighteenth-century county left two legacies that persistently frustrated later generations. Jacksonian-era residents continually debated how to recover the fertility of their land, and they struggled with problems related to blacks and slavery.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, one must note again how this portrait of Montgomery in 1783 differed from that of Frederick County. Montgomery’s planters had moved west to the silty soils of the Piedmont and re-created an economy and lifestyle very similar to the one they left behind. The settlers of Frederick County, however, had established an entirely different agriculture, economy, and community on similar soils just to

the west. From the moment they settled, the primarily German people of Frederick had constructed more diverse economies based on mixed farming. They raised a variety of grains and shipped their surplus wheat to Philadelphia and Baltimore by wagon for export. These people immediately established Lutheran and Reformed congregations and built churches in Frederick and other rural communities. Farming less-exhaustive grains, they did not deplete the nutrients of the soil, and their communities became marked by long-term stability, larger populations, and relatively even distribution of wealth. On essentially the same land, the people of Frederick had created a fundamentally different economy and society from the one that prevailed in the tidewater and Montgomery.<sup>46</sup> The contrast reveals that the traditions and intentions of settlers could be the primary determinants in the evolution of American frontier communities.

#### NOTES

1. Isaac Weld, *Travels Through North America* (London, 1799), pp. 99–105. For comments on this essay the author wishes to thank Drew Gilpin Faust, Richard Dunn, Charlie Viles, Kristen Smith, and members of the Philadelphia Center for Early American Studies. I also acknowledge the assistance of Roger Montague of the Culpeper, Virginia, U.S.D.A. field office for his research advice.

2. *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790, Maryland* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1965), p. 9.

3. The Maryland Assessment of 1783 proceeded from An Act to raise the supplies for the year seventeen hundred and eighty-three (William Kilty, *The Laws of Maryland* [Annapolis: Frederick Green, 1799], Lib. TBH, No. A., fol. 219, November, 1782). Each county made detailed returns, generally listing lands, improvements, land and soil quality, black cattle, horses, plate, and slaves by five categories. The counties are generally divided into five districts. Not all the schedules have survived however. Only those from Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Harford, Kent, Montgomery, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, and Worcester are available. Note that some of these may not be complete. The assessments are located under S-1161 at the Maryland State Archives, Annapolis. A card index to people and the tracts of land listed in the assessment is also available there.

4. Black Books, vol. 2, Maryland State Archives.

5. See Richard K. MacMaster, "Georgetown and the Tobacco Trade, 1751–1783," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society of Washington, D.C., 1966–1968*.

6. "Broken" land was highly eroded and often also referred to as "gullied." See Richard Parkinson, *A Tour in America in 1798, 1799, and 1800* (2 vols; London: J. Harding, 1805), 1:45.

7. The tax districts were not numbered in 1783, but they were numbered in an identical assessment in 1793. I have used these numbers to refer to the grouped hundreds here for the sake of convenience. See Assessment Record, 1793, Montgomery County, Microfilm #CR 34,356-1, Maryland State Archives. The

districts were: 1—Georgetown, Lower Potomac and Middle Potomac Hundreds; 2—Upper Potomac and Sugar Land Hundreds; 3—Rock Creek, Northwest, and part of Newfoundland Hundreds; 4—Seneca and part of Newfoundland Hundreds; 5—Linganore and Sugar Loaf.

8. On the Maryland “barrens,” see William B. Marye, “The Great Maryland Barrens,” *MdHM*, 50 (1955): 11–23, 120–42, 234–53. My thoughts on Indian agriculture here are derived from William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).

9. See Frank W. Porter III, “From Backcountry to County: The Delayed Settlement of Western Maryland,” *MdHM*, 70 (1975): 329–49.

10. See Franklin Knight, ed., *Letters on Agriculture from His Excellency George Washington* (Washington: Franklin Knight, 1847), p. 42.

11. See estimated yields in *Soil Survey of Montgomery County* (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1961), pp. 50–59, and *Soil Survey of Prince George’s County, Maryland* (Washington: U.S.D.A., 1967), pp. 142–49. For a useful layman’s guide to the soil surveys, see Gerald W. Olson, *Soils and the Environment: A Guide to Soil Surveys and their Applications* (New York and London: Chapman and Hall, 1981).

12. Part of Upper Potomac Hundred was covered by one assessor, and the remainder including the rest of Upper Potomac and Sugar Land Hundred was surveyed by another assessor. Thus six assessors completed the work of the five districts of the county.

13. Knight, *Letters on Agriculture*, pp. 42–43.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

15. Harry J. Carman, ed., *American Husbandry*, Columbia University Studies in the History of American Agriculture, No. 6 (New York, 1939), p. 161, and Nannie Tilley, *The Bright-Tobacco Industry* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1948), p. 8.

16. Lewis C. Gray, *Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (2 vols; Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958), 1:217–18 and Milton Whitney, “Tobacco Soils,” *U.S. Department of Agriculture Farmers’ Bulletin No. 83* (Washington, 1898), p. 8.

17. Carman, *American Husbandry*, p. 161.

18. Washington noted: “Georgetown, a good port for shipping, in [Montgomery] county, has for some years past, been the best market for tobacco in the State, perhaps in America; and the Montgomery tobacco is in high reputation.” See Knight, p. 43. On Georgetown, see also MacMaster, “Georgetown and the Tobacco Trade,” pp. 1–33.

19. Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680–1800* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press for The Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1986), p. 157.

20. Weld, *Travels*, p. 179.

21. Knight, *Letters on Agriculture*, p. 43 (my emphasis).

22. See Gregory A. Stiverson, *Poverty in a Land of Plenty: Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Maryland* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), pp. 56–84, for a discussion of dwellings on Maryland manors during the same time

period. Note that the number of "houses" does not approximate the number of households in the county (see Table 6 for total of households in each district). Not counting District 2, there were only 1,015 houses for 1,438 households. Though this might suggest the existence of a cottager population, the discrepancy in this slave-oriented county is more likely the result of an undercounting of improvements.

23. Stiverson, *Poverty*, p. 64.

24. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, William Peden, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), p. 152.

25. According to Benjamin Rush, the Germans of Pennsylvania "always provide large and suitable accommodations for their horses and cattle, before they lay out much money in building a house for themselves." Benjamin Rush, *Essays: Literary, Moral and Philosophical* (Schenectady, N.Y.: Union College Press, 1988), p. 132. See also Stiverson, *Poverty*, pp. 78–82.

26. Summary of the Frederick County Assessment, 1783, S 1005 19,999-097-007, Maryland State Archives.

27. *Heads of Families at the First Census*, p. 9.

28. See Ray Eldon Hiebert and Richard K. MacMaster, *A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, Maryland* (Rockville: Montgomery County Government and the Montgomery County Historical Society, 1976), p. 69, and Elmer T. Clark, ed., *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury* (3 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), 1:409, 442.

29. The census is reproduced in Gaius Marcus Brumbaugh, *Maryland Records: Colonial Revolutionary, County and Church* (2 vols; Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co, 1975), 2:177–233. The unidentified hundred in the Frederick County records is Sugar Loaf Hundred, which I determined by comparing the names with the 1783 assessment. The other 1776 Montgomery census lists contained in Brumbaugh are for Georgetown, Lower Potomac, Northwest, and part of Sugar Land Hundreds.

30. See Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, p. 65, and Darold D. Wax, "Black Immigrants: The Slave Trade in Colonial Maryland," *MdHM*, 73 (1978): 33–40.

31. Brumbaugh, *Maryland Records*, pp. 223–32.

32. A number approaching one indicates natural increase. See Russell R. Menard, "The Maryland Slave Population, 1658 to 1730," *William and Mary Quarterly* (3rd ser.), 32 (1975): 29–54.

33. See Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, pp. 319–34, on the early problems Africans faced in their struggle to create families and communities in the Chesapeake.

34. Weld, *Travels*, p. 179.

35. On tenancy, see Stiverson, *Poverty*, especially the tables on pp. 143–49.

36. The total number of landless householders according to the surviving schedules of the 1783 assessment was 61.3 percent. The paupers in the 2nd District were not reported, however, and I have therefore estimated the number, based on the percentage of paupers elsewhere in the county. Thus my revised estimate of the landless householders in the county is 63 percent.

37. Stiverson, *Poverty*, p. 144.

38. Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, p. 135.

39. I have counted non-householders in this calculation as those who did not live within the tax district, rather than those who did not live within the county.

40. MacMaster, "Georgetown," p. 17.

41. Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, pp. 132-34.

42. Brumbaugh, *Maryland Records*, pp. 223-32.

43. On migration into the Virginia Piedmont and Southside in this period, see Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, pp. 141-57.

44. On the decline in the Potomac tobacco market, see Jacob M. Price, *France and the Chesapeake: A History of the French Tobacco Monopoly, 1674-1791, and of its Relationship to the British and American Tobacco Traders* (2 vols.; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973), 2:728-29, 841-42. Population figures are from MacMaster and Hiebert, *A Grateful Remembrance*, p. 114, *Heads of Families at the First Census*, p. 9, and U.S. 7th Census, *Population*, 1850 (Washington, D.C., 1853), pp. 220-21.

45. See Vivian Doris Wiser, "The Movement for Agricultural Improvement in Maryland, 1785-1865" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1963), and, on nineteenth-century debates over slavery and free blacks in Maryland, Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

46. The literature on Frederick includes Porter, "From Backcountry to County"; Elizabeth A. Kessel, "Germans in the Making of Frederick County, Maryland," in Robert D. Mitchell, ed., *Appalachian Frontiers: Settlement, Society, and Development in the Preindustrial Era* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), pp. 87-103; "A Mighty Fortress is Our God': German Religious and Educational Organizations on the Maryland Frontier, 1734-1800," *MdHM*, 77 (1982): 370-87; "Germans on the Maryland Frontier: A Social History of Frederick County, Maryland, 1730-1800" (Ph.D. diss., Rice University, 1981); Grace L. Tracey and John P. Dern, *Pioneers of Old Monocacy: The Early Settlement of Frederick County, Maryland, 1721-1743* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1987); J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, (2 vols; Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1882); and T. J. C. Williams, *History of Frederick County, Maryland* (2 vols.; Frederick: L. R. Titsworth & Co., 1910).

# A Letter from George Washington

JENNIFER A. BRYAN

The manuscripts division of the Maryland Historical Society library recently received the generous gift of a George Washington manuscript from Marian Gilmor Howard Hall. The signed letter, in Washington's own hand, is addressed to John Eager Howard, governor of Maryland from 1788 to 1791. Washington replied to a short letter from Howard, enclosing a broadside listing the names of the electors for Maryland. Howard had reported to Washington that the Federalist ticket had been carried by a large majority and made a point of noting that in Washington County not one person had voted for the Antifederalists. The society gratefully acknowledges Mrs. Hall's kind donation of Washington's letter to her ancestor.

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Mount Vernon 2d Feby 1789

Sir,

I have been duly honoured with your obliging favor of the 23d ulto. enclosing your Excellencys proclamation of the Representatives & Electors by the State of Maryland.

The whole number of Representatives being federal, and the large majority by which they were chosen, is the most decisive proof that could be given of the attachment of the people of your State to the general Government—and must effectually silence any assertions that may be made in future declaring that the sentiments of the people was not in unison with that of the Convention which adopted the Constitution by so large a majority.—It is somewhat singular that among so large a number of votes as you mention to have been returned from a particular County not one should have been found opposed to the federal ticket—it was a circumstance not to be expected in any County[.]

The Election of Representatives to Congress takes place in this State to day—and upon the most moderate calculation it is thought at least one half of the number will be friends to the Constitution—the more snaguine speak with confidence of Six or Seven out of the ten.

I have the honor to be Sir Your Most Obedt. Hble. Ser G: Washington

His Excel'y John E. Howard

# The Pratt Street Wharves in the Thirties

A. BENNETT WILSON, JR.

Whether I approach Baltimore's Inner Harbor by land or by water I am always reminded of some of the most memorable times in my teens during the 1930s. From the time I was about seven years old I spent nearly all of my summers with my grandmother and grandfather in Middlesex County, Virginia, near the mouth of the Rappahannock River. Grandfather had spent a good portion of his life buying fish in the lower Potomac River from the gill and pound netters and taking them to Washington by bugeye for sale in the wholesale market on Maine Avenue. The results of this operation provided him with the financial security needed to build his own boat for the oystering trade, as internal combustion engines began to replace sail as a source of power. Shortly after he finished one boat and used it long enough to prove itself, someone would offer him a price for it he found hard to refuse. After building a series of smaller boats, he built in 1926 almost single-handedly a deadrise power boat just under sixty-five feet long. According to *Lloyd's Register* the *Juanita*, which he named after my mother, was 64 feet and 11 inches in length, 17.7 feet in breadth, drew 5 feet 6 inches, and had a gross tonnage of thirty-nine. (The 64-foot, 11-inch measurement was used by many boats of this type because boats of sixty-five feet or longer required the captain to be licensed by the Coast Guard.) At that time such boats were called "freight" boats, but they are now referred to as "buy" boats.

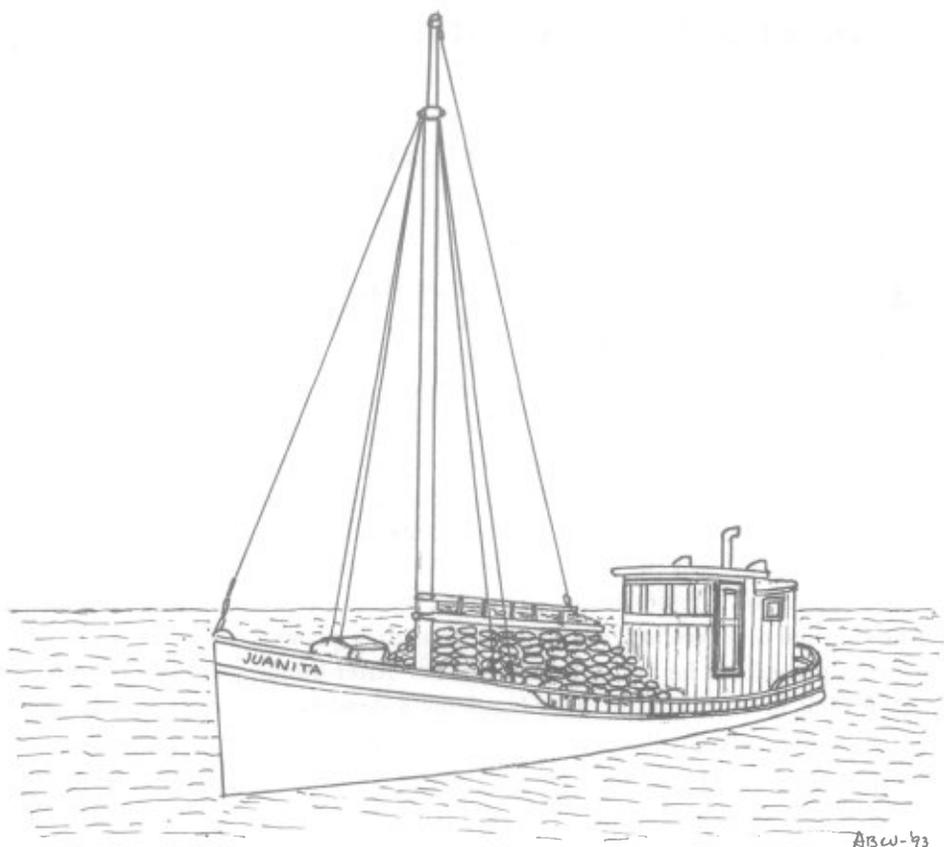
The *Juanita* was used from September to the beginning of May exclusively for transporting seed oysters from the James River for planting in the Rappahannock, some on my grandfather's own grounds, the remainder for a group of planters up the river in the Bowler's Wharf area.

Many captains of the "freight" boats would take on cargoes of coal, lumber, potatoes, and other items during the summer, but my grandfather elected to use the early part of the summer to put his boat in first class condition after the winter's work and then for home maintenance and improvement. But when watermelons planted by local farmers began to ripen late in July, he was ready to take on cargoes for the Baltimore market.

When I was nearly thirteen I was invited to go along. My grandmother always accompanied my grandfather, summer and winter, and they seldom carried additional crew. Loading the five thousand or so watermelons from a dock on either the Rappahannock or the Piankitank River took all day. We would sleep on the boat and leave about 4:30 the next morning. The *Juanita* cruised under power alone

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Mr. Wilson lives in the Northern Neck of Virginia.



Author's sketch of the *Juanita*, 1993.

between five and six knots—a little more when we could use the gaff-rigged foresail that was common on boats of this type. Because at that stage in his life my grandfather felt that sailing at night with a limited crew was too tiring, we had to either anchor or tie up for the night before proceeding to Baltimore the next day. We usually were able to reach Annapolis, where we would tie up at the Texaco dock at the end of the point that now forms the north side of the municipal docks.

We would leave at dawn the next morning and arrive at the Pratt Street Wharves about eleven o'clock. The northernmost wharf was the one used most by boats with watermelons. There were so many boats there that we almost always had to tie up alongside another boat and await our turn to get dockside. In the thirties there were still some bugeyes and small schooners in service, but most of the boats were deadrise workboats from fifty to sixty-five feet long that were engaged in some other business during the year. Many of the skippers were known to my grandfather, although a preponderance were from the Eastern Shore.



Pratt Street wharves at about the time the *Juanita* visited the city from Virginia. (Prints and Photographs, Maryland Historical Society.)

The fact that boats were often two and three deep at the dock and we had to wait from several hours to a day or even two before it became our turn to be dockside did not mean that sales and unloading could not be started. It would generally take about four days before we could unload completely and leave for home to take on another load, but on one occasion we were able to unload and be on our way home in less than twenty-four hours. All sales of more than a few melons at a time were handled by commission merchants who were generally aggressive at their trade and well worth the commission they charged. Selling was continuous throughout the day and night, the most active times being from an hour or so before sunrise until about eleven o'clock in the morning. Trucks from other parts of Maryland and parts of Pennsylvania would arrive often in the night for substantial purchases. The "Ayrabs" would come around sunrise for a few melons for their neighborhood rounds. In the afternoon and on weekends a few Baltimoreans would come and buy one or two for their own table or picnic.

When a sale of any size was made, we would hire one or two of the fellows who were usually hanging about the dock. On occasion we would hire one fellow for the duration of our stay. This was the first time I saw the effect of drugs on an individual. On one trip, a West Indian black fellow showed up and was hired. He proved to be a very energetic worker, but when he was paid after a large number of melons had been loaded he would disappear for a while, and when he returned and no other sales had been made he would lie on the street or deck and go to sleep under the influence of hashish, I was told.

On these trips I never got far from Pratt Street except to accompany my grandfather a few times to Light Street to one of the ship chandlers or commission merchants who had offices there and to the market just off Pratt Street where we got wonderful bread and meats not available at home. With my grandmother along we had the tastiest meals imaginable. Refrigeration on boats the size of the *Juanita* was unheard of, but with the market so close about the only thing we missed was the ice cream we always had at home each evening. This lack was made up by buying popsicles and Eskimo Pies from the street vendors who came by every few hours each afternoon.

There was much activity on the docks throughout the day and night. The Bull Line ships at an adjacent wharf seemed to be loading large pipe throughout the day and night, which I suppose came from Sparrows Point. The ships of the Allegheny Line that carried passengers and cargo between ports along the Atlantic Coast also docked at a nearby wharf on Pratt Street just below the Power Plant. And the Victor Lynn Trucking Company operated a busy terminal at the end of the same wharf used by the watermelon boats.

The Inner Harbor is now a monument to renovation carried out with excellent taste, is colorful in its own right, and is a most interesting place to visit and work, but Pratt and Light Streets in the thirties contained a vibrancy and color hardly found anywhere today.

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ANNE S. K. TURKOS and JEFF KORMAN Compilers

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Bibliographers must live with the fact that their work is never finished. Please notify us of any significant omissions so that they may be included in the next list. Send additional items to:

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## Book Reviews

*Tobacco in History: The Cultures of Dependence.* By Jordan Goodman. (London and New York: Routledge, 1993. Pp. xi, 280. Glossary, bibliography, index. \$59.95.)

This work synthesizes a vast number of largely secondary sources to explain how humans became involved with tobacco and how that relationship has changed over time. Tobacco was an exotic New World plant that diffused cross-culturally throughout the world. Goodman explains how that diffusion occurred and the effects on economies from the seventeenth-century Chesapeake to present day Asia. He sees tobacco as universally addictive for consumers, growers, and governments (p. 19).

Goodman first reviews the widespread use of tobacco in American Indian cultures and the process by which Europeans incorporated Indian cultural patterns into their own. Once introduced to tobacco, Europeans had spread its usage world-wide by the end of the seventeenth century. Goodman details how an Indian ceremonial drug became a recreational drug in the hands of Europeans and the ensuing medical debate on the merits of its usage. Tobacco was an item of mass consumption by men and women of all ages. Before the introduction of the cigarette in the late nineteenth century, snuff was the most common form in which tobacco was consumed. It was as popular with eighteenth-century women as it was with men, but in the nineteenth century with the arrival of cigars, and in America chewing tobacco, use by women declined. It was the cigarette, and heavy advertising campaigns, particularly since the 1920s, that encouraged women to again become tobacco consumers.

For students of the history of the Chesapeake, parts III and IV will be of greatest interest. While what Goodman has to say about Maryland and Virginia will be familiar to students of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, his world-wide perspective on tobacco and colonialism and on the industrialization of the production of tobacco, is most enlightening. Tobacco was the cash crop of choice in the American colonies because of European demand. The founders of British, French, Dutch, and Portuguese colonies all linked tobacco cultivation to success. Goodman believes that "most historians have not fully appreciated the role of tobacco in the settlement of the New World, and the powerful attraction it held as a settler's crop" (p. 141). While cultivation appealed to the small farmer in the seventeenth century, it had been abandoned by the beginning of the eighteenth almost everywhere but in the Chesapeake. Chesapeake production, by the 1770s more than a hundred million pounds annually, dominated the world. As Chesapeake settlements had been the first European colonies to develop on the basis of tobacco, they become prototypes for other settlements in the English and French Caribbean and in Brazil.

In the nineteenth century, as tobacco growing spread westward from the Bay, the importance of the Chesapeake, and indeed of America, in tobacco production

declined. Today China is the world's largest tobacco producer and Asia its largest market. The output of African growers has also increased in the twentieth century. The introduction of the cigarette caused a movement away from air- and sun-curing to flue-curing, which is far more capital-intensive. Therefore tobacco growing has changed from what was a "poor man's crop" in many parts of the world to a crop whose production is controlled by large multinational corporations.

Tobacco trade and regulation by the major colonial powers assumed great importance. Most developed some form of national monopoly to control trade and prevent smuggling. Because of profits to be made taxing trade in this commodity, governments became as addicted to tobacco as consumers. To encourage colonial production they forbade growth by farmers at home. As colonialism ended, large corporations took the place of government monopolies. These multi-nationals now control trade and, in many areas, growers as well.

Goodman has reviewed a significant amount of published literature on tobacco, and his twenty-six page bibliography is certainly the most up-to-date on the subject. He has brought together materials drawn from economic and social history, anthropology, and medicine. His thematic approach and world-wide scope provide a valuable perspective on a crop that was once the life blood of the Chesapeake and has now in Maryland dwindled to less than a thousand growers producing twelve million pounds in 1993. Although this is a slender volume, Goodman has packed it with facts and figures. In some respects, however, it may be too general for the specialist, and too detailed for the generalist. The decision of the publisher to use the modern MLA format in lieu of footnotes or endnotes is most distracting, as nearly every sentence is followed by parenthetical references. This and the book's high price are likely to relegate it to the shelves of research libraries, who of course must add it to their collections. Goodman's comparative approach to a colonial staple crop provides insights into imperial policies. He has taken an important step toward integrating the study of New World economies. Others should follow suit with similar examinations of other staples.

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*West Baltimore Neighborhoods: Sketches of Their History, 1840-1960.* By Roderick N. Ryon. (Baltimore: University of Baltimore, 1993. Pp. 199. Maps and index. \$15.)

Recent years have witnessed an impressive outpouring of articles and books intended to fill the many gaps in Baltimore's recorded history. The absence of a standard interpretive framework poses a considerable challenge to all such efforts, which therefore must function in piecemeal fashion without the benefit of a larger context for understanding the evolution of the city as a whole. Nevertheless, that same absence makes them all the more necessary, because they furnish the building blocks out of which an overall synthesis eventually may evolve.

Rod Ryon's *West Baltimore Neighborhoods* provides a valuable resource for this latter strategy. In it he traces "sketches" of the history of the city's westside over a

century of development, from 1840 to 1960, affording a kind of historical guidebook to the variety of neighborhoods that filled in three successive eras of annexation (1816, 1888, 1918) on the city's expanding fringe. Within the sections encompassed are areas from the city center west to the present city limits and from North Avenue to the line of the lower Gwynns Falls. Not primarily a chronicle of "great men" and their institutions—though both receive considerable attention—this volume is primarily the story of rowhouse development and the lives of the ordinary people—mostly working class to middle class—who populated the area and stamped its social character.

While that character may have been durable in many ways, Ryon also recognizes that one of the most important dynamics to take into account in his story is the degree of change occasioned by mobility and succession. Many of these neighborhoods became, in his words, the "setting to a major social process within Baltimore—demographic and ethnic change over time along established residential blocks" (p. ix). Indeed, this two-fold story of continuity and change poses a challenge to Ryon, as it does to any historian whose focus is bounded by locality, because it requires the ability to interpret dynamics both in space and time. Ryon shows sensitivity to this dilemma when he acknowledges that "home builders and first inhabitants of extant architecture figure prominently in sketches," though he insists that he has tried to give "successive generations . . . their due" (p. xii), a balance which he is correct in acknowledging tilts more heavily toward the former than the latter.

The issue of appropriate attention to successive groups of residents is particularly critical in recounting the history of this area of Baltimore which for over a century has had the largest concentration of African-American population and where patterns of racial change and resegregation have been so significant. By and large, Ryon is quite effective in illuminating the African-American experience in neighborhoods where black presence has been established for a long period of time. An example is his discussion of the district along Pennsylvania Avenue—from the "Bottom to Sugar Hill"—which traces its evolution from origins as a settlement dominated by free African Americans before the Civil War to the vibrant center of the institutional and entertainment life of African-American Old West Baltimore during much of this century. However, in many neighborhood stories where African-American presence has been more recent, it receives rather slight notice except in brief comments toward the end of chapters. By 1960—the book's cut-off date—considerable racial change was underway across the far westside in the dramatic instances of white flight and rapid resegregation which followed World War II.

The decision to organize the book by groups of neighborhoods ("Along Pratt Street," "Old West End," "Sandtown," etc.) provides a systematic basis for geographical coverage, making each piece a kind of mini-essay, complete unto itself. However, it also has its drawbacks, making it more difficult for the work to establish overall themes, even clarity regarding chronological relationships. To some extent this problem is offset by the way in which the organization of the book by geographic districts corresponds with the historic evolution of neighborhood type and function. Early westside neighborhoods, like those along Pratt Street, treated in some of the

first chapters of the book, illustrated the mix of workplace (primarily industries associated with the railroad in the vicinity of the B&O's Mt. Clare Shops) and workers' residences that characterized the 1840s and 1850s, while later residential development around the westside's suburban squares (Union, Franklin, and Lafayette Squares, for instance) separated residence from work, proffering a middle-class lifestyle to mid-nineteenth-century urbanites, a trend even more pronounced later in the century in sections of the Old Annex or in the area beyond the Gwynns Falls developed in the twentieth century—each the subject of later chapters. Nevertheless, coverage of specific neighborhood stories typically takes precedence over larger interpretive themes, sacrificing interpretation for detail.

The volume is amply illustrated, with fine historic photographs (unusually well reproduced for a non-commercial volume) drawn primarily from the collection of the Peale Museum, City Life Museums, and from other local library sources. Several two-page photos provide impressive panoramic vistas, most notably those showing the B&O Roundhouse and Eutaw Place. Some, these included, could be identified more clearly by date. A photograph of German-born entrepreneur William Wilkens and the accompanying ad depicting his extensive Wilkens Hair Factory complex (in operation from the 1840s until the 1920s, the site now occupied by the Westgate Shopping Center) represent an especially good example of Ryon's effective blending of text and visual illustration.

The maps could be more useful for readers; showing only neighborhood names and outlines, they lack the kind of detail required to provide sufficient orientation for the specific references in the text. Even those readers reasonably knowledgeable about this quadrant of the city might be advised to have a detailed city atlas at their side.

This is the second volume in a series under the auspices of the University of Baltimore (the first was by Karen Lewand, *North Baltimore: From Estate to Development*, 1989) designed to provide similar perspectives on each of the city's geographic sectors. When completed, the series will go a long way toward fulfilling the goal of providing a systematic set of "data books" for Baltimore, a project conceived by Larry Reich, former director of the Baltimore City Department of Planning. Ryon's contribution to this endeavor brings together a wealth of information about the history of the western quadrant of the city—economic, social, residential, institutional—not otherwise available in any single source.

W. EDWARD ORSER

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*Mencken: A Biography.* By Fred Hobson. (New York: Random House, 1994. Pp. xviii, 650. Appendix, notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$35.)

Looking up or down from wherever he is, H. L. Mencken is either amused or choleric that his biography should be the work (excellent, too) of a Southerner, a liberal to boot, a full blown "Peffesser" of English, and a Ph.D. who drinks bourbon and Dr. Pepper. Fred Hobson would have only one redeeming trait to HLM: he is married to a Southern lady, but even that fades since she is from Mississippi!

Nevertheless, the book is by far the best study of Mencken the man that has yet been done. Manchester's splendid biography, *Disturber of the Peace* (1950), is a love story between a newspaperman on his way up and his admired mentor. Kemler we dismiss with a shrug. Bode (1969) did not have all the information available now. Fitzpatrick's (1989) is a wonderful book but is only meant to be an introduction to the Sage of Baltimore. This book encompasses all the new material, is marvelously researched and annotated (as one should expect from the author of *Serpent in Eden*, 1974), and pulls no punches. Hobson not only presents the glory side of HLM but introduces (as did Fecher in the diaries) a dark and sometimes unpleasant side to the man considered by many critics as a humorist equal to Mark Twain.

Hobson shows us a part of Mencken's life that has either been overlooked or was unavailable to other writers. That is, the period between his graduation from Baltimore Polytechnic (at age fifteen, as valedictorian) and his entry into the world of journalism. This portion is splendidly researched and written. No doubt it will surprise Mencken buffs to learn that he was pro-British during the Boer War. The Kipling influence? Hobson does not bore us with many of the familiar quotations, though he throws in a few, such as football's being "a combat of gorillas," and Mencken's reference to the British Lord Douglas as "Oscar Wilde's old girl." There are other pithy remarks. Mencken was a very private person in his non-public life and cautiously circumspect in his relations with the fair sex. When a relationship ceased he returned her letters and asked that his letters be returned to him. Not all obliged, so we observe HLM simultaneously squiring Sara Haardt, Ailen Pringle, and Gretchen Hood. At the same time he was editing a magazine (the *American Mercury*), writing a weekly column and other assignments for the *Sun*, writing books while reading at least one a day for criticism, and keeping up a voluminous correspondence. What a man. Hobson also elaborates on his character—his snobbish ancestral research to prove that he came from the line of Johann Burkhard Mencken, a fifteenth-century German philosopher. Mencken's obsession with being a superior man, that his family were far above the run-of-the-mill Baltimore Germans who arrived at the same time, seems to arise out of envy directed toward the Germans (both Christian and Jewish) whose families had made it big, financially and socially: the Bauerenschmidts, Wehrs, Gottliebs, Obrechts, Riemans, tycoons in beer, banking, and tobacco, and on the Jewish side, the Hutzlers, Hochschilds, Gutmans in retailing, the Strausses in dry goods, and Greif, Schoeneman, and Sonneborn in men's clothing. These people, Jewish and gentile, lived in the mansions on Eutaw Place, had exclusive clubs, summer homes in the Greenspring Valley, usually drove matched pairs, regularly sailed to Europe, took the waters at French Lick, savored the sea in Atlantic City, and were part of the power structure of Baltimore. The Menckens in contrast lived in a small house in West Baltimore (not very fashionable), and to the great dismay of HLM, the business with the Mencken name fell on evil times shortly after his father's death. He probably protested too much when he said, "I envy no man" and was quick to join the Maryland Club when invited. Enough of this.

The book is a wonderful account of the writing arts in the first third of this century. Across its pages roam the great names of those days, and we see the awakening of the American style of writing. Mencken's contributions to it were legion. He pioneered American primitivism, published black writers in the *Smart Set* and the *American Mercury* when they could not get another national pulpit, and, despite his so-called anti-Semitism, published Jewish writers in his magazines. Hobson's biography gives us an overview of the life, both public and private, of this complicated man of genius. We enjoy the laid back America (Baltimore) of the first of this century. We see American power emerging in the second decade, the excitement of the Twenties, and the despair and fear of the Thirties. Mencken played a leading role throughout those years, and we are guided and guided well through them in the pages of this book. There is something here for everyone—historians, those curious about the literary arts of the first third of the century, and the nostalgic. Kudos to Hobson for a job well done.

ARTHUR J. GUTMAN  
*Baltimore*

*The Intellectual Construction of America: Exceptionalism and Identity from 1492 to 1800.*

By Jack P. Greene. (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1993. Pp. 216. Index. \$29.95.)

Over recent decades, historians have steadily chipped away at the idea of the "exceptionalism" of early European America, as study after study has stressed instead the continuity of the social, political and cultural aspects of the new colonies as well as the growing Anglicanization or Europeanization of North America in the eighteenth century. Jack P. Greene, who has contributed substantially to that literature, now seeks to modify its conclusions and to reemphasize a definite concept of American exceptionalism from the first encounters of Europeans with the New World through the era of the American Revolution and the establishment of the United States of America.

Greene first voiced this corrective in the Anson G. Phelps Lectures delivered at New York University in 1990 and now modestly expanded. This small volume does not purport to cover exhaustively this critical issue of "The Intellectual Construction of America," but it does provocatively set the stage for stimulating discussions to follow. Greene's epilogue particularly challenges students of early America to rethink important historiographical issues regarding the distinctiveness, actual or perceived, of European settlement in the New World.

In six chapters that move chronologically from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, Greene explores the perceptions, ideas and attitudes of Europeans to the area known as America. In point of fact, however, with the exception of brief passing references to the regions that became Mexico, Central and South America, Greene really is speaking only of mainland British America, and apart from a few French perceptions in the Age of Enlightenment, he really addresses mostly British observers. One wonders how the intellectual construction

might be differently interpreted were the focus indeed on all of America and were the sources derived as much from Spanish and southern European commentators as from those actually employed.

Greene is most stimulating in the first two chapters ("Expectations" and "Encounters") treating those years when the concepts of America first emerged, and again in the last three chapters ("Evaluations," "Examinations," and "Explanations") that reflect on the period when British America, first as colonies and later as an independent republic, became the desired model society and symbol of hope for enlightenment Europe. Less satisfactory or interpretive is the middle chapter on "Experiences," primarily a summary of colonial developments in British mainland America in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Columbus and other first generation European explorers were rarely sensitive to the actual differences or possible exceptionalism of America, as they initially saw and reported primarily what they had expected to see and largely ignored or misunderstood what was truly new. Soon, however, points of difference—seen both positively and negatively—gained ascendancy. At first, the idea of exceptionalism lay primarily in America's seemingly raw state of nature. This was a new world, a possible laboratory for all kinds of experiments and utopian dreams to improve upon the world of Europe or move dramatically away from that model. Prevalent over the next century and a half were unquestioned assumptions of European superiority over the inhabitants of America despite other advantages of the new world. That sense of superiority did not change noticeably until about 1765, when the society that had emerged in North America with a remarkable degree of social elasticity, economic opportunity, and tolerance itself became the positive focus of exceptionalism. The intellectual construction had become fully realized.

Although the Amerindians became a predominant symbol of America for Europeans, they ironically figured very little in the evolving intellectual construct. Greene frequently reminds his readers that the toll wreaked on the native population and the enslavement of African Americans were little recognized in the European or British American mindsets. Only in the last years of the periods under discussion was any appreciable attention given to the limitations of this model society that had become so much the envy of the western world.

While forced by the nature of these lectures and the length of this volume to rely on broad strokes rather than detailed analysis, Greene does draw widely and thoughtfully on innumerable sources from earlier centuries, as well as from contemporary historians. He usually integrates these materials very smoothly, but does occasionally falter with a stringing together of too many quotations or examples. A very welcome complement to the literary evidence at the heart of this interpretation are forty-six depictions of America or American themes with insightful captions. It would be nice to have them addressed even more centrally in the text rather than as asides. One can confidently expect historians, in the wake of Greene's volume, to return to the broader interpretive questions of the meaning of America.

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*The Papers of George Washington.* Confederation Series, Volume 1, January–July, 1784. Edited by W. W. Abbot. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992. Pp. xxvi, 566. Notes, index. \$47.50); Volume 2, July 1784–May 1785. Edited by W. W. Abbot. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992. Pp. xxvi, 600. Notes, index. \$47.50.)

The Washington Papers are being published in four series. The Confederation Series is the third in sequence, following the Colonial (1748–75) and Revolutionary Series (1775–1783) and preceding the Presidential Series (1788–99). These two volumes are the first of eight that will span the years 1784 to 1788, beginning immediately after Washington's return from service in the Revolutionary War and ending on the eve of his election as president under the new Constitution.

The first volume opens on 1 January 1784, one week after Washington's return from the war. To fully appreciate this important transitional time in Washington's life, it is useful to review the final weeks of 1783, which set the stage for his return to semi-private life. On 4 November Washington bade an emotional farewell to his officers at Fraunces Tavern in New York and on the twenty-fifth he observed the embarkation of British troops in New York harbor. He then set out on a slow and deliberate journey to the south that culminated in his appearance before Congress in Annapolis on 23 December 1783. Here he resigned his commission as commander of the Continental Army. He arrived at Mount Vernon on Christmas eve, anxious to retire from public affairs and turn his attention to a plantation and personal estate that had suffered considerably from his long absence—in more than eight and one-half years of public duty he had visited Mount Vernon only briefly, for a few days during the Yorktown campaign.

The Confederation Series therefore opens with Washington safely at home and anxious to embark on the improvement of his home plantation. In the ensuing weeks, confined by snow and cold weather, he instead set about responding to an avalanche of correspondence from near and afar. A review of that first wave of letters makes clear the place Washington had assumed as a central figure in the new nation. In addition to the expected letters from his social, political, and military compatriots, Washington found himself the target of labored appeals for assistance from ex-soldiers, widows, job seekers, and even a bogus relative, all seeking advice, a favor, or a letter of recommendation. Washington ignored the most annoying of the latter requests, provided advice when he could, and responded warmly to his friends and wartime associates. To Chastellux, for example, he described his contentment with the prospect of a quiet life at Mount Vernon:

I am at length become a private citizen of America, on the banks of the Potowmac; where under my own Vine & my own Fig tree—free from the bustle of a camp & the intrigues of a Court, I shall view the busy world, “in the calm lights of mild philosophy”—& with that serenity of mind which the soldier in his pursuit of glory, & the Statesman of fame, have not time to enjoy. I am not only retired from all public employments; but I am retiring

within myself & shall tread the private walks of life with heartfelt satisfaction (1:85-86).

Washington's new life as a private citizen can hardly be viewed as serene and isolated, however. The war years had taken a heavy toll on his personal holdings, and Washington launched a broadly based campaign to rectify a myriad of problems. During his absence, the Mount Vernon plantations were managed by Lund Washington, but scarcities of skilled labor, raw materials, and hard cash had forced Lund to cut corners and defer maintenance. Meanwhile, many of George Washington's debtors took advantage of monetary devaluation during the war and paid off their debts at a fraction of their pre-war value.

Washington was faced with an intimidating list of problems to resolve. Just before his departure in 1775 he had launched a major expansion and rebuilding of the mansion house and its dependencies. This work had progressed through the war years in fits and starts, but in 1784 much remained to be done to complete his architectural improvements. The grounds surrounding the main house complex were also sorely in need of attention, and by the fall of 1784 Washington was actively searching for non-native plants to add interest to the home plantation. In November for example, he wrote to George Clinton of New York:

Whenever you conceive the season is proper, and an opportunity offers, I shall hope to receive the Balsam trees; or any others which you may think curious, and exoticks with us; as I am endeavouring to improve the grounds about my house in this way (2:146-47).

Washington faced more pressing needs on his working farms. Tobacco, the dominant crop at Mount Vernon before the war, had been replaced by grain, and Washington was determined not to revert to the traditional agriculture of the Chesapeake. Instead he set out to transform Mount Vernon into a single unified plantation subdivided into several working farms, all to be conducted under the careful supervision of a single farm manager. The full scope of this plan has not yet emerged by the end of volume 2, but the foundation is clear in Washington's efforts to consolidate his land holdings, his search for a well educated and reliable farm manager, and his increasing interest in new agricultural crops and the potential benefits of lime and plaster of Paris as fertilizers.

Despite his claims of rural retirement, Washington was soon drawn into issues farther afield than the Mount Vernon plantation. His first foray into larger issues came about through the formation of the Society of the Cincinnati. Organized in June 1783 by officers in the Continental Army, the society came under attack in the winter of 1784 as a symbol of aristocratic pretensions among the army elite. Washington's campaign to modify the rules of the society provides a useful barometer of the political turmoil that was left in the wake of the Revolution.

These tensions are more evident as the issue of state's rights emerges, most notably in letters to Washington from Henry Knox of Massachusetts. Conflicts between local autonomy and federal authority are particularly visible as the states

debate the deployment of troops to protect the western frontier and offer conflicting views on the importance of protecting American rights to navigation on the western rivers.

Internal improvements, to both land and water, proved to be the primary engine for Washington's emergence on national issues in the post-war period. Concluding that the Potomac River was the key to western development and determined to make use of his own extensive land holdings in the west, Washington emerged as a leader in the implementation of Potomac River improvements. The new nation was only beginning to grapple with the need for federal investment in a national infrastructure, so the proposed Potomac River Canal was instead launched by wealthy private citizens anxious to invest in the future produce of the frontier; Washington was elected president of the "Potomack Company."

The Potomac improvements also provide evidence of Washington's concern for his public image. Always attentive to his reputation for integrity, Washington appears to be increasingly conscious of his role as a public figure and thus subject to special scrutiny. He forced changes on the Society of the Cincinnati under threat of resignation and agonized over the richly detailed marble mantel sent from England by Samuel Vaughan. When the Virginia legislature honored him with a gift of shares in the Potomac River and James River improvement projects, he wrote to Thomas Jefferson and others in search of a graceful way to decline the gift. Even the most crass solicitation from a stranger elicited a reply carefully crafted to explain his inability to grant the requested favor.

By the close of the second volume in the spring of 1785, Washington has emerged from any semblance of retirement. His day-to-day life as reflected in the correspondence ranges from the details of managing his working farms at Mount Vernon to thoughts on the future of New Orleans as a commercial competitor for the Potomac River. His place was already assured in the annals of the new nation, but it is equally clear that he had also emerged as a key figure uniquely positioned to broker compromise among the restless and at times factious members of the Confederation.

ORLANDO RIDOUT V  
*Maryland Historical Trust*

*Redeeming the Republic: Federalists, Taxation, and the Origins of the Constitution.* By Roger H. Brown. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. Pp. xiii, 337. Appendices, notes, index. \$38.50.)

Roger Brown has delved into the well-plowed ground of an old and passionate controversy in this monograph by asking the question, Why did the founding generation abandon the Articles of Confederation and design a new government in 1787? The answer, according to Brown's closely reasoned, well-written argument, is the Confederation government's failure to force or persuade the states to tax effectively.

The post-Revolution 1780s were, in John Fiske's words, a critical period in which the infant U.S. faced a growing number of crises. Congress proved impotent in the face of foreign threats, such as Spain's closure of the Mississippi River, British retention of the northern frontier, Barbary hostage-taking, and Indian unrest on the western frontier. On the commercial front, states waged regulatory war against each other's trade, issued paper money that threw local markets into chaos, and dragged their heels in filling congressional requisitions. With little or no money coming in from the states, Congress was unable to manage its own affairs, let alone fund the Revolutionary War debt, a good deal of which was held by foreigners.

Yet, according to Brown, these were all results of Congress's inability to command money, not causes of it. Like Merrill Jensen, who argued that all the nation's problems could have been redressed by amending the Articles of Confederation, Brown believes that each issue by itself was not critical enough to compel the Founders to scrap the government and design a new one. What lay at the heart of the movement for a new constitution was the overall weakness of the Confederation government due to the failure of the requisition system.

The most valuable part of this study is Brown's analysis of taxation and the requisition system in four states—Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. In all four he describes the imposition of heavy direct taxes (as in poll, property, or income taxes) levied to sink each state's Revolutionary War debt and enable it to comply with federal requisitions. (Brown obliges the reader with an appendix listing the direct and indirect tax measures passed by the four states in the 1780s.) These taxes placed undue hardships on a population for whom specie was scarce. In each state, strict enforcement was followed by popular unrest and repeal of the taxes, resulting in the state's failure to fulfill its obligations to the Confederation government.

Here Brown ties his economic analysis to the growing literature on republicanism. Some Americans who witnessed this "pressure-resistance-retreat" model (p. 122) were alarmed at the moral consequences of such weak government on an impressionable population. For them, relaxed government meant a decline in public virtue. Hard economic times were a result of luxury and extravagance that could only be ended by a return to frugality, saving, and hard work. A stronger, more energetic central government would aid this transformation by disciplining and regulating the behavior of citizens, making them productive and virtuous people and, thus, redeeming the republic. By the time of the Constitutional Convention, there was a general consensus about the need for such a government, as evidenced by the unanimous acceptance by the delegates of the provisions for a tax power, the necessary and proper clause, and the supremacy clause in the U.S. Constitution.

Brown closes with an overview of the quick acceptance of the Constitution after its adoption, pointing to the central importance financial security provided by the new government played in the commercial boom of the 1790s. Increased credit, foreign investment, and business confidence could all be traced, at least in part, to the policies of the new federal government. With the onset of Hamilton's program, the U.S. was set on the road to financial stability, if not to an age of frugality and virtue.

Readers of this fine book who dispute the idea that there can be one cause for the momentous decision taken in Philadelphia in 1787 to create a new government will nonetheless applaud and appreciate the difficult task Brown has undertaken in studying state taxation policy. Those who toil in the chaotic 1780s also will be grateful.

DAVID B. MATTERN  
*Papers of James Madison*  
 University of Virginia

*Deep Water Sailors, Shallow Water Soldiers: Manning the United States Fleet in Lake Erie—1813.* By Gerald T. Altoff. (Put-in-Bay, Ohio: The Perry Group, 1994. Pp. xii, 203. Illustrations, maps, endnotes, descriptive lists, bibliography. \$7.95 paper.)

“Perry’s Luck” has, 181 years later, resurfaced in a new War of 1812 volume that should have historians and genealogists climbing the rigging for a different view of this famous naval battle. What sets the volume aside from other books-of-the-line is Altoff’s focus on those who served and *are duly credited* with providing twenty-seven-year-old Oliver Hazard Perry his moment in naval history—“We have met the enemy, and they are ours”—the Battle of Lake Erie, 10 September 1813.

The book is divided into two parts: a brief narrative and appendices. The forty-five page narrative follows the ambitious commodore and one hundred seamen in the spring of 1813 from Rhode Island to Erie, Pennsylvania, where ship construction efforts were underway. Perry’s organizing ability, in the midst of a trackless winter, and watery, wilderness, to bring together sails, cannon, building materials and, finally, a volunteer crew of 533 soldiers, seamen, and marines, is an achievement in itself. The author carries this story to the heart of his thesis—a battle fought by a heterogenous crew of 533 men, approximately 40 per cent of whom were not sailors at all but soldiers and marines from at least sixteen different militia and federal units.

Of the 60 percent who were sailors, between ten and twenty-five were of African-American descent and had rendered excellent service. The appendices (134 pages) list each known sailor and soldier with a brief biographical description, a worthwhile endeavor to ascertain who these men were.

And finally, what does this book contribute to Maryland history? Little is mentioned, and that is unfortunate. However, notice is given to native Baltimorean Joshua Trapnell who had enlisted in the 17th U.S. Infantry. He served on board Perry’s flagship *Niagara* and was mortally wounded. His wife, Elizabeth, residing here, received a \$3.50 monthly widow’s pension.

A year later in September 1814, the heroes of Lake Erie, had become the heroes of Baltimore. Here they collected their prize money and signed aboard Perry’s new ship, the U.S. Frigate *Java*, forty-four guns, being outfitted at Fell’s Point. Among her crew, was Maryland’s own Eastern Shore native, Samuel Hambleton, Perry’s trusted friend and purser. Altoff, a National Park Service historian at Perry’s Victory and International Peace Memorial, provides at book’s end a suitable epitaph:

A heterogeneous group of men, the like of which never before or since combined to fight a flotilla of United States warships, joined for a few weeks on a hybrid fleet in a common goal. . . . Sailors and soldiers alike did their best, and the best was sufficient.

SCOTT S. SHEADS

*Baltimore*

*Thirty Years After: An Artist's Memoir of the Civil War.* Text and Illustrations by Edwin Forbes. Introduction by William J. Cooper, Jr. (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1993. Pp. xvi, 319. Introduction, 1890 title page facsimile, and illustrations. \$65.)

This late-nineteenth-century "memoir," originally published by Fords, Howard & Hulbert of New York, as "An Artist's Story of the Great War," is an engaging precursor to the avalanche of twentieth-century histories, biographies, and analyses of the conflict which cost so many lives and wreaked so much havoc in our nation. Forbes was not a historian, and his simple conclusion that slavery was the cause of the war exemplifies his downplay of the macro-issues of social, political, geographical, economic, and psychological differences between the North and the South. Yet this somewhat amateurish effort by an artist-journalist, published many years after the events it chronicles, is a delightful and insightful description of the events befalling chiefly the Northern "boys" who were sent to preserve the Union.

William J. Cooper, Jr.'s excellent introduction introduces Forbes, the recruit who went to war with a pencil and sketchbook as a "special correspondent/artist" for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. Forbes worked from the spring of 1862 until the autumn of 1864 chiefly with the Army of the Potomac in Virginia, observing most of the major battles of the eastern theater. In eighty chapters, each having just a page or two of text with accompanying sketches, the reader learns the hardships, chores, fears, and horrors—and the few joys—in the life of a Union soldier. While there is mention of officers, Forbes wrote and sketched for the mothers and fathers back home, recording what he called "life along the lines."

It is appropriate to recall the setting in which Forbes worked. In the spring of 1862, George B. McClellan commanded the army, and as good an organizer as he was, Robert E. Lee and Thomas J. Jackson outmaneuvered him throughout the Peninsular Campaign. McClellan was removed, restored to command, then removed again when he failed to pursue retreating Confederate forces following the Battle of Antietam in September 1862. Lee followed that Maryland nightmare, the bloodiest day of the war (4,800 killed and 18,000 wounded or missing), with a second attempt to invade the North, a campaign which ended with the Battle of Gettysburg. That three-day drama and carnage led by Gen. George G. Meade on the Union side, took place when Meade and Lee accidentally met at that spot. After wavering lines fought for two days, Lee ordered Gen. George E. Pickett's division to pierce the center of Meade's line, resulting in the annihilation of Pickett's division

and effectively ending the battle. This was the turning point of the war, but like McClellan, Meade failed to pursue the retreating Confederate forces and many months of war ensued.

Forbes was there. In describing Pickett's charge, he was prescient: "posterity will wonder at the misdirected zeal which brought forth such valor in so unworthy a cause." There was "evident power in the artillery service" at Gettysburg; the "sight was ghastly" and never could the value of artillery "have a more effective and frightful illustration."

Forbes did not give us an overview and chronological development of the Union advance and encirclement which led to Lee's surrender at Appomattox. Instead of military analysis, Forbes focused on the lives of soldiers in each branch of the army. There are chapters on the infantry, the artillery, and the cavalry; there are studies of regiments moving forward, resting at camp, retreating over rainy and muddy terrain; and there are vignettes of a variety of soldierly pursuits, some in battle and some at leisure. Forbes proves the theory that there is no history, only biography.

We shudder at the description and sketches of fallen warriors, some carrying and caring for the wounded, burying the dead; and we delight in the picture of Christmas dining, whiskey hidden in the turkeys and instructions on how to attack the mess sergeant's "fricaseed chicken." There is also mention of a cattle herd in Baltimore, "beef on the hoof" destined for the fighting men. Forbes smiles at "the patient beast whose eyes wondered mildly at the sights of a great city."

A chapter entitled "The Moving Column" provides a glimpse of an army on the march. This and others picture the cavalry with its flags and guidons, and the artillery drawn by horses, sometimes by men, placed in position for the coming battle. We see General Grant and his staff ride by, passing the plodding troops; we feel the scorching sun and lament the clothes of soldiers cast away along the road. We revel with Forbes in the enthusiasm of newly freed blacks working along with the soldiers, while officers ride to and fro exhorting all to give their best. "The Soup Kettle" deals with winter camp, when beans and pork were the basis of the soup, while the fife and drum called the men to mess for hardtack and dried pork. In summer, the boys foraged for fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as for items of a household nature to ease the days of rest. A limited review cannot but touch on the eighty topics covered in this tome fit for the coffee table.

Sensitive to the purpose of his calling, Forbes related how fellow reporters canvassed field hospitals recording names of the wounded to alert their families who read the newspapers. They also quizzed the groups of white and black laborers burying the dead and gathered the names for their stories. Their smooth, crisp articles, he wrote, mask the dangers and hardships the correspondents endured.

Pieces of the fighting are also described. The tasks of the lookout man for the battalion, or the regimental sentry, extended beyond warning of approaching masses of soldiers. The job included spotting enemy scouts and watching for artillery movements, all so that steps could be taken to delay the enemy's advance. Some lookouts were mounted, and some just lay behind a wall or fence, watching or firing at moving leaves. Forbes described (although he may not have been there)

Sherman's rapid march from Atlanta to Savannah, then on to Charleston and up to Petersburg to join Grant's long siege and encirclement which led to the collapse of the Confederacy.

Not every encounter resulted in success for the Union troops. In one incident, an infantry battalion and accompanying cavalry spotted and gave chase to some mounted Rebels. It was a trick—wires strung across the road felled the horses, and Confederates hidden in the woods killed twenty horses and a large number of men. Road obstructions and hidden riflemen were used by both sides to delay large units on the move, forward or in retreat.

Summer nights before tattoo were often times for recreation—leisurely suppers, fiddles and flutes to accompany dancing or singing, some gambling, and time for laundry and other chores, too. Sutlers appeared after payday, and soldiers' money was quickly gone. Professional bakers supplied bread under contract, but also sold buns and rolls to the men in camp. The army commandeered grain, even entire mills when possible, because supplies often were limited to hardtack and military necessities. There was an occasional break for cooking flapjacks, "Johnnycake" and corn pone, a form of recreation satisfying for empty stomachs as well.

There are tales of blacksmithing because horseshoes were a necessity. Portable forges, furnace, bellows and tools are described and shown in sketches, the smith working and the reluctant mule resisting. The smith also repaired and altered wagons and artillery caissons and was the army's jack-of-all-trades. Then there were carpenters and "engineers" who built and assembled pontoons for stream and river crossings; they were varied in types of construction, and many were wobbly. Often the pontoons were just planks laid across boats tied side by side. On the march, three miles per hour was rapid movement.

Signal services in that war differed in many ways from future conflicts. Binoculars and telescopes were crucial, because flags and torches were the chief means of distant communication. Forbes sketched how flags were used, recalling our more recent boy scout days.

Forbes challenged the saying that "fine feathers make fine birds." He dealt in text and sketches with the results of deprivation and exposure, which produced "pitiful" scenes of "haggard" troops. Drills and parades were often useful to instill pride and determination—one tattered regiment marched proudly, then followed that with a fine charge and performance against fresh troops of Stonewall Jackson. Forbes describes one great day in 1863 at Falmouth, when 70,000 troops under Gen. Joseph Hooker spread across the valley for a presidential review. President Lincoln, accompanied by officers' wives, servants, and politicians watched the troops march in a colorful spectacle.

Desertion and punishments sadly occurred. Initial patriotism in 1861 gave way to "bounty jumping" by 1863. In all, there were 200,000–300,000 desertions during the war, and the army resorted to executions to deter the practice, often occasioned simply by homesickness. Forbes described and sketched an incident in which an entire division was formed up to witness five executions by firing squad; the victims sat on their own coffins into which they tumbled as the rifles cracked.

Forbes spent most of his time in Maryland and Virginia, in summers and winters, which he described vividly. In the summer months along the rivers in Virginia, opposing troops often faced each other across a narrow band of water. They bathed and swam together and traded tobacco for coffee. Northern newspapers were valued and cherished items to attract fresh food and tobacco sought by the federal troops.

Hurried writing often results in poor diction and grammar. The reader would expect that the thirty-year delay would have given Forbes time to polish the text before publication; but this minor fault does not detract from the vivid and exciting drama effectively presented. It was an accomplishment for this artist-journalist to give an understanding of what it was like to be a Union soldier. Omitting strategy and politics, the focus is on terror, tedium, and the thrills of that awful time.

ROBERT L. WEINBERG

*Baltimore*

*The First Day at Gettysburg: Essays on Confederate and Union Leadership.* Edited by Gary W. Gallagher. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1992. Pp. x, 174. Illustrations, maps, appendix, notes, bibliographic essay, index. \$24.00 cloth, \$14.00 paper); *The Second Day at Gettysburg: Essays on Confederate and Union Leadership.* Edited by Gary W. Gallagher. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1993. Pp. xi, 210. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliographic essay, index. \$25.00 cloth, \$14.00 paper.)

Readers of these essays on leadership at Gettysburg on 1 and 2 July will probably conclude that it was not a well fought battle. They will also look forward to a third volume, covering the climax of the battle on 3 July, a good indication to the publisher that 1 and 2 July have been well represented.

The initial reaction—that it was a poorly fought battle—needs some modification. The commanders of the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia come off pretty badly in these essays. George Gordon Meade, however, did not assume his command until 28 June. He did after all win the battle, but there is no essay devoted to him in this collection. Robert E. Lee's strategy is harshly criticized by Alan Nolan ("R. E. Lee and July 1 at Gettysburg"), and his tactics are faulted by Gary Gallagher ("If the Enemy is There We Must Attack Him.' R. E. Lee and the Second Day at Gettysburg"). Yet both generals rose to new heights in the summer of 1863. Meade inherited a beaten army with a tradition of defeat and led it to victory at Gettysburg. Lee had wrecked an opponent twice his strength at Chancellorsville in May, then persuaded his skeptical government that the war could be won that summer—north of the Potomac. Advancing without his most trusted cavalry regiments—a situation for which Nolan faults Lee rather than Jeb Stuart—his army met and defeated segments of Meade's army just north of Gettysburg on 1 July, driving them south through the streets of town.

Field generalship that day was not especially good, a reality made clear in Gallagher ("Confederate Corps Leadership on the First Day . . . A. P. Hill and

Richard S. Ewell in a Difficult Debate”), A. Wilson Greene (“O. O. Howard and Eleventh Corps Leadership”) and Robert Krick (“Three Confederate Disasters on Oak Ridge”). Gallagher provides a useful review of the relevant literature, as well as a good narrative of the day’s fighting. He concludes that under the fast-changing circumstances, Hill cannot be said to have violated orders not to bring on a general engagement, and that Ewell’s decision not to go after the high ground south of Gettysburg late in the day was a reasonable decision. There are two important considerations here, the first of which is noted: the decision not to send forward Anderson’s division, largest in Hill’s Corps and close at hand. The other is the influence of Ewell’s first experience as a corps commander sixteen days earlier at Winchester. There, over *two* days, he had methodically destroyed a Union force with few risks or casualties. On the Union side, Wilson Greene’s essay points to the good instinct of O. O. Howard—acting commander after John Reynolds’ death—in rallying Union forces on the high ground Ewell decided not to attack late on 1 July. Greene’s portrait of Howard and Winfield Scott Hancock staking out what became the Union center on 2 and 3 July is memorable. So, too, especially for those who have walked down the notorious railroad cut north of town, or gazed out over “Iverson’s Pits” between town and Oak Ridge, is Krick’s account of the lamentable failures of three Confederate brigadiers on 1 July. Still the day had been an auspicious beginning.

The fighting on 2 July was bitter, bruising, and indecisive. Its timing was determined by Gen. James Longstreet’s First Corps, and its uncoordinated nature and indecisive outcome resulted from the great length of Lee’s line, external to Meade’s “fishhook.” Gallagher concludes that Lee’s decision to attack at all from such a position asked too much of the men in whom he had such faith. Krick’s “If Longstreet . . . Says So, It Is Most Likely Not True” clarifies the bitter postwar literary battle between Longstreet and his former brother officers. As for Longstreet’s march to the right and the attack up the Emmitsburg Road, Krick speaks of Longstreet’s “ugly game” with Lee, and of a “marching comedy of errors.” Another consideration—the possibility of a different outcome on the right if John B. Hood had not been wounded early—is not raised. The Confederates might have taken more than the Devil’s Den at the foot of Little Round Top. Farther north, their success in the Peach Orchard and Wheatfield are illuminated from the Union side in William Robertson’s, “The Peach Orchard Revisited.” The author concludes that “time and historical fashion” have not been kind to Gen. Daniel Sickles, and that his Third Corps paid a heavy price at the time. Still later in the day, the successful defense of Culp’s Hill is described in Greene’s “Henry W. Slocum and the Twelfth Corps.” Characterizing Slocum’s performance as generally deficient, Greene demonstrated that even when the pressure of Longstreet’s attacks began to tell, forcing Meade to reinforce his left with most of the Twelfth Corps, from his right, Culp’s Hill remained beyond Ewell’s grasp. Greene believes that the “window of opportunity” the Confederates saw along the Baltimore Pike was only open for an instant, if at all. Ewell advanced only one division (less the Stonewall Brigade) in his attack.

Scott Hartwig's essay stands apart from the others in its topic and approach, "No Troops Had Done Better." A study of Gen. John C. Caldwell's First Division (Second Corps) in the Wheatfield fight on Meade's left, the essay would be a well chosen reading assignment in a course in Civil War history. Caldwell's battle is presented in the context of the mechanics of divisional command. The author explains the objectives of discipline and drill in the rapid massing of firepower, while overcoming difficulties of communication and the deficiencies of weapons. He stresses the importance of good divisional staff officers as well as brigade commanders. Caldwell earned high marks in getting the most out of his men in a bad position—none of which mattered, suddenly, when the whole position gave way around him. Caldwell's more difficult challenge then was "to watch his men die in large numbers. Perhaps the most difficult challenge of command was to acknowledge this grim fact and persevere."

BRANDON BECK

*Shenandoah University*

## Books Received

*Women Who Kept the Lights: An Illustrated History of Female Lighthouse Keepers* gathers in one volume the stories of women who maintained lighthouses in the United States. The stories span three centuries, and authors Mary Louise Clifford and J. Candace Clifford include Marylander Fannie Salter, who successfully manned the Turkey Point Light for the years 1925–1947. With an abundance of photographs and illustrations, this work provides the reader with a new look at a unique profession in our maritime history.

Cypress Communications, \$19.95

Duncan Farrar Kenner may be familiar to Civil War historians for his dangerous diplomatic mission to Europe in a final attempt by the South to avoid defeat. However, the life of this prominent Louisiana resident is examined more fully by Craig A. Bauer in *A Leader Among Peers: The Life and Times of Duncan Farrar Kenner*. This volume offers a study of Kenner in context of his times, both as a private and public figure.

Center for Louisiana Studies, \$22.50

Olney, Maryland now has its own written history thanks to authors Healan Barrow and Kristine Stevens. *Olney: Echoes of the Past* provides, in one slim volume, a history of this small town in Montgomery County from its first land buyer in 1713 to “the birth of new Olney” only a few years ago. Many highlights of the area’s history can be uncovered here, accompanied by illustrations and photographs.

Family Line Publications, \$12.00

*A Rescue From Oblivion* is a short history of Holy Trinity Parish and Cemetery of Eldersburg, Maryland. This volume, which is the result of an effort to restore the cemetery after years of neglect, offers resources for anyone interested in this parish’s past. A time line and brief history are included, as well as photographs and information concerning the restoration of the cemetery.

Friends of Old Trinity Cemetery, \$6.95

During the 1904 fire that swept through the city of Baltimore, more than two thousand members of Maryland’s National Guard were called to duty. Working for seventeen days, they performed a wide variety of jobs in the burning city. Dean Yates, in *Forged By Fire: Maryland’s National Guard at the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904*, provides a detailed account of the actions taken by these men, as well as an extensive roster of those who served.

Family Line Publications, \$11.50

*Kegley's Virginia Frontier* can now be purchased in a reprint edition from Heritage Books, Inc. F. B. Kegley's work chronicles the development of the territory from its settlement as a colony to the organization of communities in the late eighteenth century. This two-volume edition contains many maps and illustrations, and also includes information on the location of prominent homesteads.

Heritage Books, Inc., \$70.00

# Notices

## NINTH ANNUAL MARYLAND HISTORICAL MAGAZINE PRIZE

The Publications Committee of the Maryland Historical Society offers an annual award of \$350 for the most distinguished article to appear in *Maryland Historical Magazine* during the previous year. The prize for 1993 is awarded to Frederick C. Leiner for "The Baltimore Merchants' Warships: *Maryland* and *Patapsco* in the Quasi-War with France," which appeared in the fall issue.

## SUMMER AT SNOW HILL

The Snow Hill area provides a variety of fun and educational events for the whole family. Included in this summer's schedule are the Old Fiddler's Picnic at Furnace Town Historic Site on 20 August, the Worcester County African American Heritage Festival on 11 September, and the annual Snow Hill Heritage Weekend on 24-25 September. For a full schedule, please call Kathy Fisher at (410) 632-2032.

## LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PUBLISHES NEW GUIDES

Three recently published guides from the Library of Congress shed new light on the vast holdings at this institution. *Library of Congress Music, Theatre, Dance: An Illustrated Guide* gives a colorful overview of the holdings of its music division and those holdings throughout the library's collections which concern theatre and dance. *Library of Congress: Manuscripts*, with both color and black and white illustrations, is an attractive guide for anyone using the ten thousand collections in the library's manuscripts division. *The African-American Mosaic: A Library of Congress Resource Guide for the Study of Black History and Culture* lists numerous examples of government documents, manuscripts, books, photographs, music, and films from the library's collections that examine African-American accomplishments.

# Maryland Picture Puzzle

Test your knowledge of Maryland history by identifying the location and date of this eastern Maryland scene. When and where was this photograph taken? What changes have taken place? Send your answers to

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The spring 1994 Picture Puzzle shows the Tome School and gardens in Port Deposit, Cecil County, Maryland (ca. 1915). At the outbreak of World War II, the navy bought the school and converted it to the Bainbridge Training Center. The Tome School then moved to another property in North East, Maryland, and is still operating today. The site also housed the Chesapeake Job Corps Center.

The winter 1993 Picture Puzzle was correctly identified by the following people: Mr. Carroll Henderickson, Mrs. Bertha J. Kennedy, Mrs. Thelma R. Kline, Mr. Raymond Martin, Mr. Percy Martin, Mr. James T. Wollon, Jr., and Mr. W. G. Willmann.



# HISTORICAL REGISTER AND DICTIONARY OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

*From Its Organization,  
September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*

By Francis B. Heitman



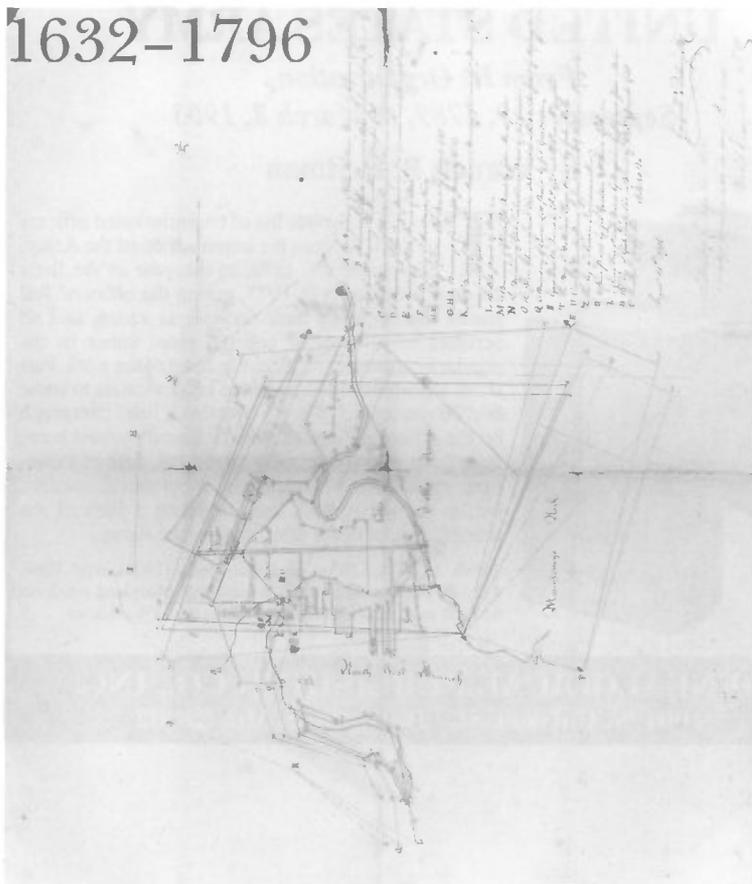
**T**his is a complete list of commissioned officers of the U.S. from the organization of the Army, September 29, 1789, to the year of the list's original publication in 1903, giving the officers' full names and showing their services as cadets and all services as officers or enlisted men, either in the regular or volunteer service. The heart of the work, Part II, an alphabetical listing of the officers, runs to some 60,000 entries. Each entry contains a brief paragraph on the officer giving his state or country where born, state from which originally appointed, date of induction, rank, date of discharge, promotions, medals, battles participated in, and, in about a fifth of the entries, date of death after leaving the Army.

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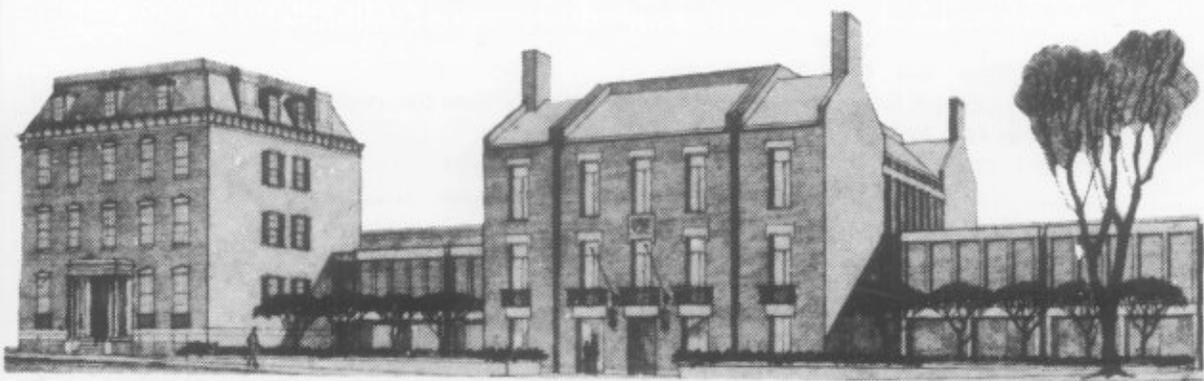
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